

Session 2019-21
No. 79



Monday
6 July 2020

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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

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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

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

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Written Statements

Monday, 6 July 2020

Global Human Rights Sanction Regime

[HLWS330]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: My Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Dominic Raab), has made the following written Ministerial statement:

I have today laid before Parliament, under the powers of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018, the Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020.

These Regulations enable sanctions to be imposed on those who are involved in serious violations or abuses of human rights. This sanctions regime is not about punishing countries or peoples. It is a smart tool allowing the Government to impose both asset freezes and travel bans on specific individuals or entities in order to provide accountability for and deter serious violations of human rights around the world and prevent those responsible from coming to the UK or laundering their assets here. These sanctions will help to ensure that the UK is not a safe haven for those involved in serious human rights violations, including those who profit from such activities.

The Regulations allow for Ministers to impose sanctions on persons who are involved in activities that would amount to a serious violation of the right to life; the right not to be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; and the right to be free from slavery, not to be held in servitude or required to perform forced or compulsory labour. The Global Human Rights sanctions regime can be used to target different forms of involvement in such violations of human rights, including those who profit from them. The Regulations allow for non-State actors as well as State actors to be designated.

The introduction of this autonomous human rights sanctions regime will give the UK an additional, powerful tool to support human rights across the world, and underpin Global Britain's role as a force for good in the world.

Today, I will also publish the first persons to be designated under this new sanctions regime.

Higher Education Student Finance

[HLWS329]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: My honourable friend the Minister of State for Universities (Michelle Donelan) has made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

I am announcing details of student finance arrangements for higher education students undertaking a course of study in the 2021/22 academic year starting on 1 August 2021.

Maximum tuition fees for the 2021/22 academic year in England will be maintained at the levels that apply in the 2020/21 academic year, the fourth year in succession that fees have been frozen. This means that the maximum level of tuition fees for a standard full-time undergraduate course will remain at £9,250 for the 2021/22 academic year.

Maximum undergraduate loans for living costs will be increased by forecast inflation (3.1%) in 2021/22. And the same increase will apply to maximum grants for students with child or adult dependants who are attending full-time undergraduate courses in 2021/22.

We are also increasing support for students undertaking postgraduate courses in 2021/22. Maximum loans for students starting master's degree and doctoral degree courses from 1 August 2021 onwards will be increased by forecast inflation (3.1%) in 2021/22.

I am also announcing today changes to Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) that will increase flexibility for students to access the support that they need. The undergraduate DSA, which is currently structured as four separate sub-allowances, will be simplified into one allowance in line with the postgraduate DSA.

The same maximum allowance (£25,000) will apply to both full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate DSA recipients in 2021/22. This will apply for both new and continuing students. An exception for travel costs will be made to this maximum cap, which means that travel costs will in effect continue to be uncapped.

I am announcing today that individuals who have been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain as a bereaved partner, and resident in the United Kingdom and Islands since the grant of such leave, will not be required to demonstrate three years' ordinary residence in the United Kingdom and Islands before the start of a course to qualify for student support and home fee status in relation to new higher education courses from 1 August 2021 onwards.

I am also announcing today that individuals in protection based categories (those with Humanitarian Protection Leave, Calais Leave, Section 67 Leave and Stateless Leave) starting or continuing higher education courses in 2021/22 will no longer be required to demonstrate three years' ordinary residence in the United Kingdom and Islands before the start of a course to qualify for student support and home fee status.

Further details of the student support package for 2021/22 are set out in the attached document.

I expect to lay regulations implementing changes to student finance for undergraduates and postgraduates for 2021/22 later in 2020. These regulations will be subject to Parliamentary scrutiny.

The Statement includes the following attached material:

Details of Higher Education Student Finance 2021 [Details of Higher Education Student Finance for 2021.docx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2020-07-06/HLWS329/>

Historic Records Transfer

[HLWS328]

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

The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 amended the Public Records Act and introduced a 20-year rule for the transfer of historic government records to The National Archives. This replaced the 30-year rule in force since 1967. The Act made provision to phase in this change over 10 years, beginning in 2013. The transitional arrangements require the Cabinet Office to transfer records of 1997 and 1998 by the end of this year. The Cabinet Office's historic records include those of the Prime Minister's Office. This statement provides an update on the impact of COVID-19 on our work in this area.

Since 2015, the Cabinet Office has made two transfers a year, in July and December. The July opening is discretionary and reflects the Cabinet Office's commitment to opening as much as possible as early as possible.

Measures to contain COVID-19 have inevitably had an impact on work in this area. It will not, therefore, be possible to transfer records in July this year. Whilst work has continued as normal in many areas across the Department, archival work requires physical access to hard copy files to complete the review and preparation of documents for transfer.

In addition, The National Archives building in Kew closed to the public and staff on 17 March 2020 and at present is unable to facilitate the transfer of new records.

I remain fully committed to meeting our obligations under public records legislation. The Department is

undertaking an assessment of the wider impact of the COVID-19 restrictions on work in this area. We will work with the National Archives and the Advisory Council on National Records and Archives and will provide a further update to the House in due course.

MI5 Compliance Improvement Review

[HLWS327]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: My rt hon Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department (Priti Patel) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

On 15 July 2019, my predecessor made a Written Ministerial Statement regarding the MI5 Compliance Improvement Review conducted by Sir Martin Donnelly. Sir Martin made 14 recommendations focused on achieving lasting improvements in the areas of compliance, openness and legal assurance.

The Director General of MI5 and I remain fully committed to the implementation of the recommendations.

As Sir Martin recommended, it is my intention to independently verify the implementation of his recommendations. However, it has become apparent that, due to the impacts of Covid-19, the start of this verification, which was originally due to be completed by the end of June 2020, will have to be postponed.

MI5 expect to complete implementation of Sir Martin's recommendations by the end of 2020. The independent verification will therefore commence at the beginning of 2021.

I have full confidence in the integrity of MI5 officers and their commitment to complying with legal obligations. They do a vital job in keeping our country safe, a task that, at this time of uncertainty, is more important than ever.

Written Answers

Monday, 6 July 2020

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme

Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Armed Forces veterans are presently in receipt of funds from the Armed Forces Compensation Scheme. [HL6299]

Baroness Goldie: The Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Compensation Scheme came into force on 6 April 2005 to pay compensation for injury, illness or death attributable to Service that occurred on or after that date. It replaced the previous compensation arrangements provided by the War Pensions Scheme and the attributable elements of the Armed Forces and Reserve Forces Pensions Scheme. Tax-free lump sum awards are paid to all Service personnel and veterans as compensation for pain and suffering for an injury or illness that is predominantly caused or made worse by Service.

The Scheme also provides a Guaranteed Income Payment (GIP) for more severe injuries or illnesses.

Armed Forces Compensation Scheme statistics for the last financial year are published on Gov.UK and can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/armed-forces-compensation-scheme-statistics-financial-year-201920>

Arms Trade: Middle East

Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno

To ask Her Majesty's Government to which countries in the Middle East they sell arms. [HL6177]

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel: Arms exports require an export licence. As outlined in my response to the Noble Lord on 22 June, UIN:HL5414, HM Government publishes Official Statistics (on a quarterly and annual basis) about export licences granted, refused and revoked to all destinations on GOV.UK, including those for exports to the Middle East. These reports contain information including the overall value, type (e.g. Military, Other) and a summary of the items covered by these licences.

Asthma: Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to address any variation in the number of emergency admissions to hospital for asthma and severe

asthma across Clinical Commissioning Groups. [HL5866]

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Department for Health and Social Care is taking to address the rate of emergency adult admissions to hospital for asthma and severe asthma at NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group. [HL5867]

Lord Bethell: Respiratory disease is a clinical priority within the NHS Long Term Plan. The respiratory interventions proposed in the NHS Long Term Plan include early and accurate diagnosis of respiratory conditions, which help prevent avoidable emergency admissions for asthma.

The Quality Outcomes Framework (QOF) ensures all practices establish and maintain a register of patients with an asthma diagnosis in accordance with National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidance. An update to the General Practitioner contract includes an improved QOF asthma domain which incorporates aspects of care positively associated with better patient outcomes and self-management. NHS England also commissions the national asthma audit programme that provides data on a range of indicators to show improvements and opportunities in asthma outcomes. Audit data are then used by providers to assess the quality of their services and to support quality improvement.

Aviation: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to establish an air bridge for tourists to use between the UK and Sri Lanka. [T] [HL6240]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Government has published a list of travel corridors - countries and territories from which passengers arriving to the UK will be exempt from the current 14-day self-isolation requirements.

In deciding which countries to include in this initial list, we have been guided by the science. We will continue to take an objective, evidence-based approach.

Although Sri Lanka is not included in the first list of country-based exemptions to the current requirement, the Government recognises how important tourism is between our two countries.

The Government continues to work closely with international partners around the world to discuss arrangements for travellers arriving from the UK.

The Government will keep the requirements, countries and exemptions set out in the Regulations under review. The next review of the Regulations will be carried out by 27 July 2020.

Bicycles and Electric Scooters: Safety Measures

Asked by Lord Lexden

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to make bells or hooters mandatory on all bicycles and scooters being ridden on public highways. [HL6007]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Rule 66 of the Highway Code recommends that bells are fitted and used as necessary. All bicycles are required at point of sale to be “fitted with a bell which is of a category intended for use on bicycles”. The Regulations do not compel cyclists to keep a bell fitted to the bicycle after purchase. The Government has no plans to make bells for bicycles mandatory.

The Department for Transport is rapidly developing plans for e-scooter trials, having recently consulted on this. Electric scooters used in trials will be required to have a bell or horn.

British Nationals Abroad

Asked by Viscount Waverley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of which countries in the EU (1) do, or (2) do not, adequately protect the interests of UK citizens resident in those countries. [HL6037]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government and the European Union have ratified the Withdrawal Agreement, which provides citizens with the certainty they need about their rights going forwards.

During the time-limited transition period, until 31 December 2020, UK nationals are able to live, work and travel in the EU broadly as they do now - and vice versa for EU citizens coming to the UK. After the transition period, UK nationals who are lawfully residing in a Member State will be able to stay - and vice versa for EU citizens lawfully residing in the UK. Member States can choose whether to require UK nationals who are lawfully resident by the end of the transition period to apply for a residence status to confer their rights under the Withdrawal Agreement. Member States may allow applications for residence to be made voluntarily during the transition period. However, any decisions made during this time has no effect until after the end of the transition period. Under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, any new residency systems that are put in place must be open until at least 30 June 2021, subject to extension in certain circumstances.

The Government is working closely with Member States on their implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement during the transition period via our network of Embassies, High Commissions and Consulates. We are also providing the latest advice to UK nationals in the EU via our Living in Guides on gov.uk. The Specialised Committee on Citizens' Rights oversees the implementation and application of Part Two of the Withdrawal Agreement. Any breaches that we are aware

of leading to a loss of rights for UK nationals, during the transition period or in the future, will be raised through this forum and escalated to the Withdrawal Agreement Joint Committee if required.

Broadband: Standards

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many individuals have enquired about the availability of higher speed broadband under the Universal Service Obligation launched on 20 March. [HL6140]

Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the average cost quoted to individuals who have sought a better broadband connection under the Universal Service Obligation launched on 20 March. [HL6141]

Baroness Barran: The broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO) provides every household with the legal right to request a broadband connection that provides download speeds of at least 10Mbps and an upload speed of at least 1Mbps, where this is not already available commercially.

Performance monitoring of the Universal Service Obligation is the responsibility of Ofcom. Chapter 9 of the Universal Service Statement by Ofcom sets out the reporting requirements for Universal Service Providers (BT and KCOM) who will be required to report at least every six months on the number of USO requests received, the number of requests accepted, the number of Confirmed Orders received that involved a customer agreeing to pay excess costs and the number of requests rejected by the Universal Service Provider including an explanation of the reason why.

As the Universal Service Obligation launched on 20 March 2020, no statistics on its progress have yet been published by Ofcom.

Bus Services

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what long-term plans they have to support the viability of the bus industry. [HL5990]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Buses will continue to have a significant role to play in connecting people, supporting the economy and decarbonising the transport network. The Government will account for all of this in the long-term National Bus Strategy. We are currently considering our approach to this.

The Government will also be working closely with stakeholders in 2020 to produce the Transport Decarbonisation Plan, which will set out how we intend to tackle transport emissions, and get all road vehicles, including buses to transition to zero-emission.

In terms of financial support, the Prime Minister announced in February £5 billion of funding for buses and cycling and committed to getting 4,000 new zero-emission buses on the roads. The details of the programmes, including how funding will be distributed, will be announced in due course. The Government recognises the importance of this funding, not just for decarbonisation, but for supporting the UK bus industry.

Camping Sites: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Redesdale

To ask Her Majesty's Government when camping sites with shared facilities will be permitted to open to the public. [HL6019]

Asked by Lord Redesdale

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether rules on shared facilities that have been in operation throughout the lockdown for sites such as service stations will be different for camping sites with shared facilities once those sites reopen. [HL6020]

Asked by Lord Redesdale

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what evidence they base any decision to allow any site with shared facilities to reopen; how they differentiate between sectors when deciding which businesses may reopen; and whether they have found any scientific reason which means that the reopening of camping sites with shared facilities should be treated in a separate manner to any other part of the hospitality sector. [HL6021]

Baroness Barran: From 4 July, people can travel to holiday accommodation - including camping sites - for overnight stays in England.

Campsites will be allowed to reopen shared showering and toilet facilities. These facilities, as well as campsites' waste and water points, should adhere to all Government guidance on cleaning and social distancing to minimise the risk of transmission.

This marks Step 3 in the Government's recovery strategy. All decisions have been and will continue to be based on scientific evidence and public health assessments.

Care Homes: Protective Clothing

Asked by Lord Pendry

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care on 7 June that the targets for testing patients for COVID-19 in care homes and supplying staff with personal protective equipment in such homes have been met, what plans they have to supply such equipment to close family members of residents of those homes; and what assessment they have made of the impact such provision could have on the morale of (1) residents, and (2) their families. [HL5876]

Lord Bethell: The Government has stepped in to support the supply and distribution of personal protective equipment (PPE) to the care sector. We have focused on ensuring there is an emergency supply in place, whilst building a longer-term solution for distribution to the sector. There are no plans to provide PPE for the family of care home residents. We continually keep our guidance under review.

We are aware that limiting visits in care homes is difficult for many families and residents who want to see their loved ones. 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 impacts of COVID-19 on mental health and loneliness.

We are reviewing our policy on visitors and are looking to update our guidance shortly.

Carer's Allowance

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Carers UK and the Universities of Sheffield and Birmingham Caring and COVID-19: hunger and mental well-being, published on 17 June, in particular the finding that unpaid carers are twice as likely to have used foodbanks as the general population during the pandemic; and in the light of that finding, what plans they have to increase the rate of Carer's Allowance on a (1) temporary, and (2) permanent basis. [HL6010]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government appreciates the support that Carers UK, and other carers organisations offer to unpaid carers who provide such vital support to some of the most vulnerable people in society, including pensioners and those with disabilities.

For those who find themselves in severe financial difficulties, the Prime Minister has announced over £60 million for local authorities in England to support local welfare assistance programmes. In addition, on 8 May, the Government announced funding of up to £16 million for charities to provide millions of meals over a 12-week period; this includes the £3.5 million Food Charities Grant Fund to support charities with grants of up to £100,000 so they can continue to provide food to vulnerable people.

Unpaid carers in financial need are able to access the full range of Social Security benefits, which include Universal Credit and Pension Credit. Carer's Allowance is also available to provide a measure of financial recognition for those who give up the opportunity of full-time work in order to provide regular and substantial care.

We continue to support those carers in most need through additional amounts (premiums) in means-tested benefits and have also announced increases to the standard allowance in Universal Credit. Meaning claimants will be up to £1040 better off this financial

year, which some carers receiving Universal Credit will benefit from.

The rate of Carer's Allowance was also increased in early April as part of the annual uprating process. Since 2010, the rate of Carer's Allowance has increased from £53.90 to £67.25 a week, meaning nearly an additional £700 a year for carers. By 2024 – 25, spending on Carer's Allowance is forecast to be £3.6 billion in real terms, almost doubling from £1.8 billion in 2010/11, meaning we would be helping almost twice as many carers.

During the current emergency we have focussed on ensuring carers do not inadvertently stop receiving Carer's Allowance because of changes to patterns of care. This includes allowing emotional support to count towards the 35 hours of care being provided by the carer as well as relaxing the rules around breaks in care. These changes aim to support carers whose role has, in many cases, become harder due to the need to self-isolate or shield the person they care for.

Children: Day Care

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether working parents are now permitted to use paid childcare providers but are not permitted to ask family members or friends to provide childcare while they are at work. [HL6011]

Baroness Berridge: From 1 June, early years settings have been able to welcome back all children. Guidance for parents and carers about opening from 1 June is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, has announced that from 13 June, single adult households can form a 'support bubble' with one other household. This will mean that lone parent households may form a support bubble with another household to provide informal childcare, so long as no members of either household are shielding. This will enable grandparents and other family members to provide childcare support to lone parents, or for grandparents living on their own to look after grandchildren from one other household. The guidance is available at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>.

On 23 June, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced that from 4 July, two households will be able to meet up in any setting subject to social distancing measures. Friends and family members providing informal childcare from that date will need to adhere to guidance on social distancing. The guidance is available

at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july>.

Civil Service: Pensions

Asked by Baroness Crawley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of how women are affected by the loss of their Civil Service 'survivor' pension, following cohabitation with a new partner. [HL5840]

Asked by Baroness Crawley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many Civil Service (1) widows, and (2) widowers, in (a) England and Wales, and (b) Scotland, have had their pension revoked as a result of remarriage or cohabitation. [HL5841]

Asked by Baroness Crawley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the cost of paying all 'survivor' pensions to Civil Service (1) widows, and (2) widowers, regardless of remarriage or cohabitation and when it occurred. [HL5842]

Asked by Baroness Crawley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the financial impact on Civil Service (1) widows, and (2) widowers, of the loss of their 'survivor' pension due to remarriage. [HL5843]

Lord True: The Government Actuary's Department completed the quadrennial actuarial valuation as at 31 March 2016 and showed that the average annual pension for surviving adult dependants in the Civil Service pension arrangements was around £2,100 for male dependants and around £4,700 for female dependants.

The pensions of widows, widowers and surviving civil partner pensions, under the Classic section of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme, cease if they remarry or cohabit. In 2018, the Government Actuary's Department estimated the extra cost of paying all survivor pensions, regardless of remarriage or cohabitation and when it occurred. The estimated extra cost in 2018 was around £550m for reinstating pensions that had already ceased and an annual future cost of around £30m for stopping the practice going forward. The estimate was a simplified approximation based on an earlier estimate done in 2006.

Based on our initial investigation of ceased pensions for the last financial year (April 2019 to March 2020), seven widows' and four widowers' pensions were ceased due to remarriage or cohabitation. However, we have also noted that the figure for the financial year ended March 2020 may not reflect the experience in recent years as the initial data obtained shows an average of around 120 pensions ceasing on remarriage or cohabitation per year for the period 2008 to 2019. The split of the data previous to the financial year ended March 2020 between widows and

widowers, and the breakdown between England, Wales and Scotland, are not available at this point.

Competition and Markets Authority: Resignations

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will review the remit and powers of the Competition and Markets Authority further to the statements made in the Chairman's resignation announcement. [HL6015]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to ensuring that markets work well for consumers and businesses and keeps the remit and powers of the Competition and Markets Authority under constant review.

Consumers and Businesses: Protection

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to protect UK consumers and businesses following Wirecard AG filing for insolvency. [T] [HL6208]

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on low income consumers of the Financial Conduct Authority's decision to close down Wirecard's operations on 26 June; and what steps they plan to take to protect anyone without access to resources as a result of that decision. [T] [HL6231]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: Wirecard AG, the German payments provider, entered administration last week. It has a UK subsidiary, Wirecard Card Solution Ltd (Wirecard UK), which is FCA regulated. This subsidiary is not in administration.

Last week, the FCA temporarily applied restrictions to Wirecard UK's business while the firm ensured it could safeguard customers' money. The government worked closely with the FCA to understand and mitigate the impact of this measure – for example, the DWP worked to ensure those who received benefits into accounts using Wirecard UK had an alternate means of receiving payments.

The firm has now been able to demonstrate that it has met the necessary conditions, and the restrictions were lifted on Tuesday 30 June. Customers can access their money as usual.

Contraceptives

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what percentage of GPs offer self-injectable contraceptives in the UK. [HL5944]

Lord Bethell: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the percentage of women who opt for self-injectable contraceptives in the UK. [HL5945]

Lord Bethell: No assessment has been made. The information requested is not collected centrally.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme: Sheep Farmers

Asked by Baroness Randerson

To ask Her Majesty's Government why British Wool was not considered to be appropriately established as an organisation to qualify for support under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme; what assessment they have made of the impact of this decision on sheep farmers generally; and what discussions they have had with the Welsh Government about the impact of this decision on the Welsh economy. [HL6138]

Lord Callanan: Decision-making on whether a business is eligible to access the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) is fully delegated to the accredited lenders for the scheme, and individual lending decisions remain at the discretion of these accredited lenders. Information on eligibility criteria for the CBILS can be found on the British Business Bank's website.

Businesses from most sectors can apply for the full amount of the facility under the CBILS. The scheme is demand-led and take up by a particular sector, or in a particular region, will depend upon application rates and the assessment of those applications by lenders. The schemes are accessible across the UK and lenders have been accredited across the UK's nations and regions.

The Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme is part of a comprehensive package of support for businesses, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, deferral of VAT and income tax payments, grant funding for small businesses, and more. Regular calls are held between UK Government Ministers and Ministers in the Devolved Administrations on the Covid-19 pandemic and economic impacts and responses.

Coronavirus: Cricket

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government on what scientific evidence they base their announcement that a cricket ball is a natural vector of disease and could contribute to the spread of COVID-19. [HL6241]

Baroness Barran: Officials are working very closely with the ECB and their medical experts to understand the unique qualities of cricket. We are working at pace to

shape guidance that will allow the safe return of competitive cricket and other team sports. Any shared sporting equipment may risk transmission, but these risks can be mitigated with good hygiene practice as being adopted across a wide range of sectors.

Coronavirus: Death

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Government what assessment they have made of reports that people with COVID-19 have died alone and been left for up to two weeks before being discovered; and what steps they are taking to ensure that isolated people without family or other support systems can be better (1) safeguarded, and (2) supported, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [T] [HL5348]

Lord Bethell: We recognise how difficult the past months have been for people who are socially isolated and any death is a tragedy.

Local safeguarding partnerships have been ensuring that people with care and support needs are being safeguarded throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, including working with the shielding population to ensure they are well-supported. We are also aware of good practice through community-led social work and support networks which have ensured people stay connected and any concerns or support needs are identified more quickly.

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government who is responsible for setting the COVID-19 alert level. [HL5306]

Lord Bethell: The Alert Level is currently determined and set by the Chief Medical Officers of the United Kingdom. The Chief Medical Officers consider advice from the Joint Biosecurity Centre (JBC), which is a part of the Department, in setting the level. In time the JBC is expected to take on responsibility for independently setting the Alert Level.

Cricket: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) whether they will publish the scientific evidence that cricket balls are a potential vector for COVID-19; (2) when this information was shared with the England and Wales Cricket Board; and (3) which mitigation measures were discussed with the Board. [HL6197]

Baroness Barran: Officials are working very closely with the ECB and their medical experts to understand the unique qualities of cricket. We are working at pace to shape guidance that will allow the safe return of competitive cricket and other team sports. Any shared sporting equipment may risk transmission, but these risks

can be mitigated with good hygiene practice as being adopted across a wide range of sectors.

Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) which measures should be brought forward to restore grassroots cricket to at least its pre-COVID-19 levels of activity; (2) what plans they have to develop a national strategy; and (3) who they plan to consult on any such strategy. [HL6199]

Baroness Barran: Officials are working very closely with the England and Wales Cricket Board on plans to deliver the safe return of club cricket as soon as possible. We are working at pace to shape guidance that will allow the safe return of competitive cricket and other team sports. Any shared sporting equipment may risk transmission, but these risks can be mitigated with good hygiene practice as being adopted across a wide range of sectors. I hope to make further progress on this in the coming weeks so that teams can enjoy a great cricketing summer.

In terms of developing and consulting on a national strategy for grassroots cricket, this is a matter for the England and Wales Cricket Board.

Asked by Lord Naseby

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow professional county cricket to be played on a 'one metre plus' basis thereby allowing grounds to be opened to the public for county matches. [HL6243]

Baroness Barran: We are working closely with the sector, including the England and Wales Cricket Board, to facilitate the return of spectators to elite sport. A multidisciplinary working group, including medical directors from a number of sports, has begun to develop guidance around the return of spectators to stadia. Guidance will incorporate medical, sports, and venue expertise as well as the experience of other sectors that will reopen to audiences.

We will continue to be led by wider public health guidance such as the "one metre plus" concept and the working group will reflect on all emerging best practice, both domestically and internationally, in their work.

Croatia: Immigration Controls

Asked by Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make urgent representations to the government of Croatia about ending the alleged beatings and forced pushback of migrants and asylum seekers at the border with Bosnia Herzegovina. [HL6072]

Baroness Sugg: We recognise the challenge faced by Croatia in dealing with increased migrant flows, but we remain concerned about the allegations of mistreatment of migrants at the Croatian border. We are monitoring developments, including the subsequent arrest of two

Croatian police officers. The UK is committed to the principle that asylum seekers, whilst subject to immigration processes of other countries or awaiting the outcome of an asylum application, are entitled to decent, humane and fair treatment. The UK Government regularly engages in dialogue with Croatia and international partners on a variety of issues related to the need to address irregular migration and the challenges it presents.

Dementia and Parkinson's Disease: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Gale

To ask Her Majesty's Government what additional support is in place for the carers and family members of those people with Parkinson's disease dementia and dementia with Lewy bodies who may be experiencing greater levels of distress following the COVID-19 lockdown. [HL5848]

Lord Bethell: We recognise the crucial role that unpaid carers play in supporting people with conditions like dementia, especially during the pandemic.

On 8 April we published COVID-19 guidance for unpaid carers in an online only format on GOV.UK to support carers during the pandemic, which includes general advice on infection control and caring where someone has symptoms.

We have commissioned research through the National Institute for Health Research on the best ways to mitigate the psychological and social impact of COVID-19 on people with dementia living in the community and their family carers. Work has already started with phased outputs to August 2020.

Department for International Development: Public Expenditure

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Prime Minister on 16 June about the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (HC Deb, cols 666–8), what plans they have to change the current budget for the Department for International Development. [HL6035]

Baroness Sugg: The budget of the new department will combine the FCO and DFID budgets. The Government remains committed to the target of spending 0.7 percent of our national income on aid, which is enshrined in law. As the Prime Minister has said and as reflected in the name of the new department, the development work of DFID will remain central to the new department's mission. The Government will set future budgets as part of the next Spending Review. An announcement on the Spending Review will be made in due course.

Department for International Development: Reorganisation

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the public health implications of merging the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office during the COVID-19 pandemic (1) globally and (2) for the UK. [HL6068]

Baroness Sugg: The current pandemic makes ever clearer the need for international collaboration on health and the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will continue to work with DHSC to support the public health needs of the UK where this requires international activity, for example facilitating learning from other countries and work on health issues in multilateral forums.

The UK is the second largest Government donor on global health. This Government is committed to SDG3, ensuring healthy lives and promoting health and wellbeing for all at all ages, and supporting countries to achieve Universal Health Coverage. The pandemic is showing us the vital importance of strong and resilient health systems, with effective public health functions for both preventing and protecting people from health threats and ensuring continued access to quality essential health services, respecting rights and leaving no one behind.

The Government remains fully focused on stopping the spread of COVID-19, mitigating both the direct and indirect impacts, and saving lives. We are using UK aid to its full effect to counter the health, humanitarian, and economic risks and impact of this pandemic in the developing world. By creating the new FCDO the Government is aligning our development and diplomatic efforts to maximise our influence and expertise and ensure we are in the best position to continue to drive the international response to the pandemic – funding the development of a vaccine and supporting the global recovery.

Asked by Baroness Goudie

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultation, if any, took place with humanitarian and development experts before the decision was made to merge the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. [HL6069]

Baroness Sugg: On 16 June the Prime Minister announced that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development will merge to form a new international department – the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The Government will continue to engage closely with interested stakeholders, including UK and international NGOs, in the weeks and months to come as we work to create the new department, which will unite our development expertise and first class diplomatic service to make the UK a force for good in the world.

*Asked by **Baroness Goudie***

To ask Her Majesty's Government why the decision to merge the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was taken before the conclusion of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [HL6070]

Baroness Sugg: The Prime Minister is determined that the Integrated Review later this year will set an ambitious vision for the future of the UK as an active, internationalist, problem-solving and burden-sharing nation. The new Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will be central to the delivery of that vision, so it needs to prepare now to be ready by the Autumn.

This reform will create a department that for the first time for many years has the combination of size, reach and expertise to project us effectively internationally and make sure that we spend our development money in the best possible way.

Digital Technology: Proof of Identity

*Asked by **Lord Clement-Jones***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consultations they have held, or plan to hold, following the close of their Call for Evidence on Digital Identity. [HL6119]

Baroness Barran: The government launched the Digital Identity Call for Evidence on 19th July 2019 and will shortly be publishing a response. The call for evidence provided the government with a wide evidence base in support of digital identity policy-making. We will continue to use a variety of ways to seek input from interested parties including formal engagement if the need arises.

Disability: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on disabled people. [HL6026]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: The Government is committed to supporting disabled people affected by the COVID-19 outbreak. We continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people using existing and new data sources.

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work has had discussions with charities, disabled people's organisations and individuals to understand the range of experiences disabled people have had during the COVID-19 pandemic and to identify the support needed as lockdown restrictions are eased.

The Government is ensuring that disabled people continue to have access to accessible communications, updated guidance, including workplace and transport related guidance, as well as other support during the Covid-19 outbreak. All equality and discrimination laws and obligations continue to apply during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cabinet Office Disability Unit continues to work with disability stakeholders and across Government Departments to ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered in the UK Government's response to COVID-19.

Driving Tests: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Strasburger***

To ask Her Majesty's Government when driving tests will be permitted to restart; and whether the maximum period between passing the theory test and taking the driving test will be extended for those whose test was due when tests were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6183]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency's (DVSA) priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been to protect the public and save lives. That remains its priority as it restarts its services.

Driver and rider instruction can restart in England from Saturday 4 July 2020.

Car driving tests will restart in England on Wednesday 22 July 2020, which will give learner drivers time to have refresher lessons and practice before taking their test.

The DVSA is aware that some individuals may be in a situation whereby their theory test certificate will expire before they are able to take their practical driving test. The two-year validity period of the theory test certificate is set in legislation. This is so the candidate's theoretical knowledge remains current. To extend the validity period would require legislative change.

Emergencies: Risk Assessment

*Asked by **Lord Browne of Ladyton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord True on 4 June (HL Deb, col 1436) and subsequent correspondence, whether a committee of ministers has assumed responsibility for receiving reports from the cross-departmental governance board referred to in the UK Biological Security Strategy. [HL5986]

Lord True: There is an undertaking in the Biological Security Strategy for the Governance Board to report progress to the Ministerial National Security Council. The progress report is in its final stages of drafting and will be submitted to the National Security Council when this has cleared the process.

Energy: Somerset

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the delays to, and (2) the costs of, the South Somerset District Council and Opium Power Limited energy storage plant project. [HL6018]

Lord Callanan: The Government has not made any such assessment. This is a matter for the parties involved.

Eritrea: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the risk of starvation to the people of the Afar region of Eritrea due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and (2) whether that risk has been exacerbated by the actions of the government of Eritrea. [HL6109]

Baroness Sugg: We are concerned that the population of Eritrea, including the Red Sea Afar people, are facing food insecurity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 and the desert locust outbreak are compounding existing humanitarian need caused by residual effects of war and climate change. Humanitarian and development programmes in Eritrea are being adapted to address current food security challenges. DFID funds life-saving activity in Eritrea, including providing £4 million to UNICEF in 2019-20 to help treat malnutrition in under-fives and provide access to safe hygiene and sanitation services. This programme continues to deliver basic nutrition supplies in the Afar region during the pandemic.

Like most countries affected by COVID-19, the authorities have imposed an internal travel ban and lockdown across Eritrea. We will continue to urge for these measures to be necessary, proportionate, time-bound, transparent and regularly reviewed. We raise our concerns about human rights in Eritrea with the Government at every opportunity, and we will continue to monitor the situation and risks in country.

Eritrea: Overseas Aid

Asked by Baroness Anelay of St Johns

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to ensure that Government-funded international development and aid programmes do not involve forced labour in Eritrea, with particular regard to indefinite military conscription. [HL6110]

Baroness Sugg: UK Aid funds life-saving activity in Eritrea, including providing £4 million to UNICEF in 2019-20 to help treat malnutrition in under-fives and provide access to safe hygiene and sanitation services. UNICEF work with the Ministry of Health and at all levels of the local community to build the capacity of the

health service in Eritrea and encourage a long-term, sustainable response to undernutrition. No military personnel are employed in the delivery of the programme and enhanced safeguards are in place to prevent the use of forced labour.

The UK continues to call for reform of Eritrea's use of a system of universal and compulsory national service directly with the Government of Eritrea. At the 41st session of the Human Rights Council in July 2019, the UK renewed calls for Eritrea to reform the national service system, recognising that sustainable reform of national service needs to happen in tandem with an improved economic situation and job creation.

Ethnic Groups: Equality

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had, and with whom, about the steps the Race Disparity Unit is taking to help tackle racial injustices in society. [HL6023]

Lord True: In line with the practice of successive administrations, details of internal discussions are not normally disclosed. Ministerial meetings with external individuals and organisations are published and available on GOV.UK.

The Race Disparity Unit (RDU) continues to collect and publish data and analysis about variances in treatment or outcome affecting people of different ethnicities.

Females: Labour Turnover

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of women who have left the workforce as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6084]

Lord Callanan: We are actively monitoring the impact of Covid-19 on the labour market, including the impact on men and women.

We are continuing to analyse the ONS labour market statistics, with the latest edition released on the 16th of June which cover the 3-month period to the end of April. These statistics showed that compared to the previous month's release, the economic activity rate has fallen more for men (0.4 percentage points) than it has for women (0.2 percentage points). The next ONS labour market statistics covering the 3-month period to the end of May will be released on the 16th July.

It is still too early to make any firm conclusions of impacts, or provide any full estimates of the number of women who have left the workforce as a result of Covid-19, due to the lag in the official statistics. Impacts have not yet fully filtered through to headline indicators, including the number of those economically inactive.

Film and Television: Equality

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to encourage greater diversity in UK film and TV. [[HL6090](#)]

Baroness Barran: Encouraging greater diversity in UK film and TV is a priority for government, and from our engagement with the cultural and creative sectors - including a roundtable hosted by my colleague Caroline Dineage on the impact of Covid-19 on diversity in these areas - we recognise that this issue has been under greater scrutiny in recent weeks.

We are working with the British Film Institute (BFI), in their role as the Government's arm's length body with responsibility for the sector, to improve representation both on and off screen, including through supporting the wider adoption of the BFI's world-leading Diversity Standards. In addition, we are seeking to identify and promote best practice; through our sponsorship of the National Film and TV School, we have recently provided an additional £65,000 to support students from diverse backgrounds and we are also engaging with industry to drive change on the ground. In January this year, DCMS launched the ScreenSkills Apprenticeship Pilot with industry partners Netflix and Warner Media. Recruitment will focus on underrepresented groups within the sector and will not consider previous qualifications as a key recruitment criteria - thereby providing opportunities to people from all backgrounds.

We welcome the work Ofcom has undertaken through their annual diversity reports and the work of Project Diamond, an initiative supported by the broadcasters, which captures diversity data and the Creative Industries Council's recent Diversity Charter. The Government continues to encourage employers to publish diversity data not because they have to but because it is the right thing to do.

GAM Greensill Supply Chain Finance Fund

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will investigate conflicts of interest in the promotion of trade finance bonds in association with Greensill. [[HL6017](#)]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) is the conduct regulator for the financial services industry in the UK. The FCA will not normally make public the fact that it is or is not investigating a particular matter, in order to protect the effectiveness of any investigation it carries out. The FCA has been made aware of this Parliamentary Question.

Gambling

Asked by The Lord Bishop of St Albans

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by Lord Ashton of Hyde on 2 July 2019 (HL Deb, cols 1344-6), and in the light of the pledge made by the Betting and Gambling Council's five largest members this week, whether the announcement made in the July 2019 statement is now null and void; and if not, where the money has been distributed; what involvement Her Majesty's Government had in the announcement by the Betting and Gambling Council; and why is the money no longer being distributed by the committee launched by Lord Chadlington. [[HL6028](#)]

Baroness Barran: On 2 July 2019 five major gambling operators committed to raise their contribution to funding for research education and treatment to 1% over a four year period, and as part of that to spend a cumulative total of £100m over four years on expanding treatment services. On 15 June 2020 industry body the Betting and Gaming Council set out further detail about the allocation of industry donations for the 2020-21 financial year, and announced that the charity GambleAware would be funded to expand treatment services.

The government has been clear that the gambling industry has a responsibility to protect people from gambling harm and support those who have been affected. It welcomed industry's commitment to increase contributions and will monitor closely the progress of these new measures. While this a voluntary agreement, Ministers and officials have been clear that funds must be spent independently of industry and focused exclusively on reducing gambling related harm.

Gender: Equal Pay

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the suspension of gender pay gap reporting during the COVID-19 pandemic on gender pay gap inequality. [[HL6083](#)]

Baroness Berridge: In recognition of the unprecedented uncertainty and pressure facing employers due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the Government and the Equality and Human Rights Commission suspended enforcement of the gender pay gap reporting deadlines for 2019/20. However, employers can still choose to report their data and we have carried on providing support to those who need it. Over 5,500 employers have reported to date and more continue to do so.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Compensation

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times alternative dispute resolution has been used to seek settlements with HS2 landowners. [[HL5977](#)]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Ltd routinely offers Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) to affected parties to resolve disputes in cases where it is not possible to reach agreement by direct negotiation.

Referrals to ADR require the agreement of both HS2 Ltd and the affected party. To date, three statutory blight cases have been determined through ADR. Guidance on ADR was published by HS2 Ltd on 30 May 2018.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Euston Station

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government which consultants have been commissioned to study the efficiency of the proposed HS2 Euston station, including the station approaches. [HL6038]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In response to the Oakervee Review, the Department has commissioned a study looking into the efficiency of the future Euston station, including the station approaches. The study is being supported by Arup, KPMG, Lendlease, Mace-Dragados and WSP, along with the Institution of Civil Engineers who facilitated an expert panel to review the tunnelling proposals.

History: Curriculum

Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the merits of including Black British history in the national curriculum in England. [HL6024]

Baroness Berridge: The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity and supports all pupils and students to tackle racism and have the knowledge and tools to do so.

The national curriculum is a framework setting out the content of what the department expects schools to cover in each subject. The curriculum does not set out how curriculum subjects, or topics within the subjects, should be taught. The department believes teachers should be able to use their own knowledge and expertise to determine how they teach their pupils, and to make choices about what they teach.

As part of a broad and balanced curriculum, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how

different groups have contributed to the development of Britain, and this can include the voices and experience of Black people. The flexibility within the history curriculum means that Black British history can already be included in the teaching of the curriculum.

House of Lords: Equality

Asked by Lord Lucas

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker, further to the official Twitter account for the House of Lords celebrating Pride month, what plans there are to celebrate other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 on the same account. [HL6137]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The Administration wants to reach a broad and diverse audience via its social media channels and different content is devised for LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. For this reason, the House of Lords Official Twitter account has run campaigns previously relating to the following characteristics: Race, Religion, Gender and LGBT+; as well as national campaigns such as Mental Health Awareness Week and National Inclusion Week.

The purpose of this is to create communications and engagement initiatives which seek to enhance the reputation and demonstrate the impact of the House of Lords, building a compelling case for its continued place at the heart of the UK's parliamentary democracy. The Administration will continue to look for opportunities to deliver a diverse range of campaigns which reflect the diversity of our audiences.

House of Lords: Finance

Asked by Lord Dobbs

To ask the Senior Deputy Speaker what the annual budget for the House of Lords was for each of the last five years; and what is the estimated budget for the House of Lords for each of the next two years. [HL6122]

Lord McFall of Alcluith: The table below shows the original budget figures for the last 5 years, current year and subsequent two financial years:

EXPENDITURE TYPE	£'000							
	2015-2016 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2016-2017 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2017-2018 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2018-2019 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2019-2020 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2020-2021 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2021-2022 ORIGINAL BUDGET	2022-2023 ORIGINAL BUDGET
Capital	27,602	45,409	55,396	65,855	81,710	67,132	59,089	50,206
Resource	103,035	108,832	123,207	132,335	176,305	140,970	149,615	154,772
Total	130,637	154,241	178,603	198,190	258,015	208,102	208,704	204,978

The following points should be noted:

- The budgets from 2020-21 onwards are based upon figures approved by the Commission in January 2020 and are agreed as part of a rolling 3-year planning cycle.

- The budgets for Restoration and Renewal and the Shadow Sponsor Body are included within the relevant years up to 2019-20, but not in subsequent years.

Hydrogen

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish a strategy for the development of hydrogen as a means of reducing atmospheric pollution and reaching net zero targets; and if so, when. [HL5978]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier for the UK. We are currently developing our strategic approach to hydrogen and its potential to deliver against our net zero goals. We will set out our plans in due course.

In order to inform our approach we are undertaking extensive stakeholder engagement as we develop new policy to help bring forward the technologies and supply chain we will need to grow the UK hydrogen economy. This includes business models to support the deployment of, and investment in, low carbon hydrogen production and a £100m Low Carbon Hydrogen Production Fund to stimulate capital investment. We will be further engaging with industry on both schemes throughout the year.

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact on the economy of using hydrogen as an energy source. [HL5980]

Lord Callanan: We are exploring hydrogen's potential to deliver against our clean growth goals – meeting our decarbonisation needs and capturing the commercial opportunities of the global low carbon shift.

In November 2019 we published the Energy Innovation Needs Assessment (EINA) for hydrogen and fuel cells. This identified that the future market for all hydrogen technologies could yield around £5.3bn of GVA and create nearly 50,000 jobs by 2050 to meet demand in export and domestic markets.

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the amount of private capital that might be available to support a hydrogen-based economy. [HL5982]

Lord Callanan: While Government does not have a formal assessment of all private capital that might be invested in the hydrogen economy, it is clear that there is growing interest in this area and we are in regular discussions with businesses about their investment plans for hydrogen projects, including those that are ready for very near-term deployment.

We are undertaking extensive stakeholder engagement as we develop new policy to help bring forward the technologies and supply chain we will need to grow the UK hydrogen economy. As part of this we are looking to formalise regular engagement between Government and industry to discuss and drive development of the UK hydrogen economy. This will consider how we can best work together to encourage increased private sector investment in hydrogen projects, growing the hydrogen supply chain and providing clean growth and new jobs across the UK.

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the plans of other countries to develop hydrogen strategies of their own. [HL5983]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier.

We are closely monitoring international hydrogen developments and participate in a range of international fora, including the International Partnership for Hydrogen for Fuel Cells in the Economy, Mission Innovation and Clean Energy Ministerial. These offer opportunity to discuss and other countries' domestic hydrogen strategies in detail. This contributes to understanding of, for example, respective drivers for interest, levels of ambition, innovation priorities and policy support frameworks. This is informing our own strategic approach to the development of hydrogen in the UK context, including opportunities for partnership and economic benefit.

Hydrogen: Employment

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact of the development of a hydrogen strategy on employment in the UK. [HL5981]

Lord Callanan: The Government is committed to exploring the development of hydrogen as a strategic decarbonised energy carrier, alongside electricity and other decarbonised gases. As such we are currently developing our strategic approach to hydrogen and its potential to deliver against our net zero goals. In November 2019 we published the Energy Innovation Needs Assessment (EINA) for hydrogen and fuel cells. This identified that the future market for all hydrogen technologies could yield around £5.3bn of GVA and create nearly 50,000 jobs by 2050 to meet demand in export and domestic markets.

We are already investing up to £121m in innovation to support a range of projects exploring and developing hydrogen across the value chain, unlocking jobs and growth. We are developing further policies to grow the UK hydrogen sector and will assess the impact of these in

due course, including the positive impact this could have on clean growth and jobs.

Industry: Minerals

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Birmingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans are in place to ensure the UK's continued access to critical minerals on the international market up to, and following, 31 December. [HL6040]

Asked by The Lord Bishop of Birmingham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the growth of UK-based green industries and the resultant need for high levels of critical mineral supplies. [HL6041]

Lord Callanan: The Government fully understands the value of critical minerals to green industries and a whole range of other advanced manufacturing sectors in the UK. We understand that security of supply is fundamental; industry needs to have confidence that it can access the raw resources it needs, particularly if it is to move into new, low-carbon markets and help the UK to become a net zero nation by 2050.

The Government's strategy for securing access to critical minerals, or any other key materials and components, has long been to vigorously secure, at a global level, free, fair and open international trade. This approach has remained successful for many decades and the Government remains confident that this remains the most effective approach going forward. However, we will continue to monitor the supply of these minerals closely.

Infrastructure: Finance

Asked by Baroness Eaton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow local authorities to borrow against future Community Infrastructure Levy receipts to invest in infrastructure to help unlock housing growth. [HL5991]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 (as amended) do not permit local authorities who charge CIL to borrow against the value of future receipts to invest in infrastructure, with the exception of the Mayor of London.

Regulations introduced in 2019 permit the Mayor of London to borrow against any future income generated by the Mayoral CIL charge and use the receipts collected to repay the loan value. This is specifically for funding relating to Crossrail.

Whilst local charging authorities are not permitted to borrow against the levy receipts, they may use the Levy to repay any expenditure on infrastructure that has already been incurred, under Regulation 60.

Presently, there are no plans to amend the existing Regulations to allow local authorities to borrow against

any future receipts to invest in infrastructure to unlock housing growth.

Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review: Gender

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government how they will ensure that gender equality is taken into account in the outputs and policies of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [HL6162]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK remains fully committed to advancing gender equality and women's rights, including every girl's right to 12 years of quality education. The UK International Development (Gender Equality) Act makes consideration of gender equality in all UK Official Development Assistance (ODA) a legal requirement.

The Government paused its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in April due to the pressing need to focus on COVID-19. We have formally recommenced the Review, building on the work done since February, and it is expected to conclude later in the year. Both the Review and the merger of Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development are evidence of the Prime Minister's commitment to a unified British foreign policy that will maximise our influence around the world, including on gender equality and women's empowerment. Our aim continues to be for an ambitious and bold Integrated Review that is guided by the UK's foreign policy, national security and development objectives.

Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review: Third Sector

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that there is sufficient civil society consultation and involvement in the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [HL6160]

Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger

To ask Her Majesty's Government how civil society views will be taken into account in the outcome of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [HL6161]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Government paused its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in April due to the pressing need to focus on COVID-19. We have formally recommenced the Review, building on the work done since February.

Our aim continues to be for an ambitious and bold Integrated Review that is guided by the UK's foreign policy and national security objectives.

We will be engaging with Parliament, the Devolved Administrations, external experts and wider stakeholders with an interest in our nation's security and prosperity. This includes our allies and partners, building on our ongoing dialogue on COVID-19 response and recovery.

The Government will conduct targeted engagement that will bring crucial external voices and expertise to bear in defining our ambition for the UK's role in the world and setting the country on the best possible trajectory to recovery from COVID-19.

Investment: Regulation

Asked by Lord Myners

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will investigate the time it took for the Financial Conduct Authority to take action to prohibit the regulated entities from promoting the sale of "mini bonds". [HL6016]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: This is a matter for the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which is operationally independent from the Government.

In November 2019, the FCA used its temporary product intervention powers to introduce a temporary ban on the mass-marketing of speculative illiquid securities, including speculative mini-bonds, to retail investors. This temporary ban applied from 1 January 2020.

On 18 June 2020, the FCA published proposals to make this temporary ban permanent.

Israel: Families

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they last discussed with the government of Israel reports of cases of married couples, or parents and children, not being permitted to live under the same roof, because of residency or other requirements, particularly in and near Jerusalem; what was the outcome of those discussions; and what plans they have to continue to raise such issues with that government. [HL6167]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Whilst we have not raised this specific issue with the Government of Israel, we regularly make clear our concerns about the restrictions on movement imposed by the Israeli authorities on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. In East Jerusalem, the UK Government supports Palestinians to uphold their residency rights through the provision of legal aid services delivered through our legal aid programme.

Israeli Settlements

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the views of people who live in the Palestinian Territories on the proposed annexation of parts of the West Bank by the government of Israel; and

what steps they are taking to ensure that any such views are reflected in their policies towards the government of Israel's proposals. [HL6097]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Officials from our Consulate-General in Jerusalem engage regularly with a wide range of Palestinian individuals and communities across the entire West Bank, including in Area C. It has always been true that any peace settlement needs the support of both peoples. We urge the parties to find a means of restarting negotiations, and avoiding unilateral action. As the Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa outlined at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 24 June, 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.

Israeli Settlements: Palestinians

Asked by Baroness Tonge

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about reports that (1) crops have been burnt by Israeli settlers, and (2) that Israeli soldiers prevented Palestinians putting out the fire. [HL6099]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have not made an assessment of these reports. We continue to raise with Israeli counterparts our concerns about settler violence and have also stressed the importance of the Israel security forces providing appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population.

Large Goods Vehicles: Road Traffic Offences

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Keen of Elie on 16 June (HL4922), what plans they have to enable the submission of photographic evidence by (1) local authorities, and (2) local action groups, of any abuse of weight restriction orders. [HL6049]

Lord Keen of Elie: Cases on Weight Restriction Orders are heard in the Magistrates Courts. Prosecutors are entitled to submit photographic evidence to the court, provided it is relevant and its source can be proved. This is in accordance with existing rules of evidence of long standing. It is a matter for the individual prosecutors (whether police forces or local authorities) whether they choose to call witnesses to present photographic evidence to a court of trial.

Music: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Government what steps they are taking to measure whether COVID-19 related Government support, and in particular the Coronavirus Large

Business Interruption Loan Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, is protecting jobs and businesses in the music industry. [[HL5687](#)]

Baroness Barran: While we have not completed a specific survey for the music sector, we have analysed the wider Creative Industries sector through the DCMS Coronavirus Impact Business Survey, which provides information on the effects of the pandemic on DCMS' sectors. Results are published on gov.uk and further analysis of the responses will be available in the coming weeks.

We appreciate that the Covid-19 pandemic presents a significant challenge to the music industry and we know that freelancers and individual artists are facing enormous difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak. The Government's response has been one of the most generous and comprehensive in the world, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the Bounceback Loan Scheme business rates reliefs. In addition, the Government has adapted the welfare system so that the self-employed can access Universal Credit in full, to help people get quicker and more generous support when they need it most.

We continue to speak with HM Treasury colleagues to ensure that the full spectrum of government support reaches the UK's world-leading music industry.

The Secretary of State has recently received the open letter signed by numerous artists and performers, in support of the “#Let the Music Play” campaign. We are committed to continuing to work with the music industry to understand the difficulties they face and help them access support through these challenging times and through recovery.

National Parks Authorities

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether members of national park planning boards are bound by collective responsibility under rules approved by a Secretary of State. [[HL6050](#)]

Asked by Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the rules on the role, responsibilities, and accountability of members of national park planning boards within the UK follow a national model rule book, consistent across national park authorities; and whether applications to vary such rules have to be approved by a Secretary of State. [[HL6051](#)]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Local Government Act 1972 allows local planning authorities (including National Parks) to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by a committee, sub-committee, or an officer. The operation of such committees, including which applications are considered by members and the

procedure by which they are governed, are administrative matters for the National Park Authority.

Like other planning committees, where a decision is made by a National Park planning committee, members should carefully consider all the evidence before them and must be prepared to modify or change their initial view in light of the arguments and evidence presented to them. They must make their final decision at the meeting with an open mind based on this evidence. The law requires that planning decisions are made in accordance with the local development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Park authorities must also promote and maintain high standards of conduct by their members. Members have to abide by their authorities' code of conduct and this must be consistent with the seven 'Nolan' principles of standards in public life. National Park Authorities are responsible for ensuring members observe their codes of conduct and maintain high standards.

National Security Council: Committees

Asked by Lord Browne of Ladyton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the (1) Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies, (2) Nuclear Deterrence and Security, (3) Implementation of the Strategic Defence and Security Review and National Security Strategy, and (4) Cross-Government Funds, sub-committees of the National Security Council still exist; and which Secretary of State or minister chairs each sub-committee. [[HL5987](#)]

Lord True: The bodies referred to were part of a number of sub-Committees of the National Security Council. The Cabinet Office regularly publishes lists of Cabinet Committees and their membership on [GOV.UK](#).

Since July 2019, the National Security Council itself now considers matters relating to national security, foreign policy, defence, international relations and development, resilience, energy and resource security.

Nigeria: Internally Displaced People

Asked by Baroness Cox

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the United Nations Security Council about protecting civilians displaced by terrorist activity in (1) northern, and (2) central, Nigeria. [[HL6060](#)]

Baroness Sugg: The UK Government remains concerned about the deteriorating security situation in parts of Nigeria, including in the northern and central states. We have made clear to the Nigerian authorities, at the highest levels, the importance of protecting civilians and human rights for all Nigerians. Our current assessment is that terrorist activity is limited to North East Nigeria where Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa conduct appalling attacks on all those who do not

subscribe to their extremist views. The UK drafted a UN Security Council press statement, released on 16 June, condemning the recent terror attacks in Felo, Monguno and Nganzai, Borno State.

We acknowledge that intercommunal violence and criminality has devastating effects on communities in Northern and central states. We have engaged closely with the UN, Federal Government, state governments, the National Economic Council and other international partners to help address the drivers of intercommunal violence and push for solutions. We have encouraged efforts by the UN's Office for West Africa & the Sahel, UNOWAS, to increase engagement with regional governments on efforts to address the long-term causes and drivers of violence. We reiterated our commitment to the region in a UK statement on 5 June at the UN Security Council, setting out our intention to work with the UN and international partners to ensure peace, stability, sustainable development and justice for the people of West Africa and the Sahel, including Nigerians.

Overseas Aid

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Prime Minister on 16 June about the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (HC Deb, cols 666–8), what changes they plan to make to the operation of UK Official Development Assistance. [[HL6032](#)]

Baroness Sugg: On 16 June the Prime Minister announced that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development will merge to form a new international department – the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The Government remains committed to the target of spending 0.7 percent of national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is enshrined in law, and the UK continues to abide by internationally agreed rules on what constitutes ODA. The majority of ODA will be administered by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, while a small amount will continue to be spent by other departments who bring relevant expertise to specific projects including BEIS, DEFRA, DIT and Home Office (to deliver ODA eligible services in the UK).

The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office will have oversight of the Government's aid policy and final decisions will be taken by the Foreign Secretary. The Integrated Review, expected to conclude later in the year, will define the Government's ambition for the UK's role in the world and its outcomes will shape the objectives for the new department, including for ODA.

All departments are accountable to parliament and to taxpayers for how they spend UK aid.

Overseas Aid: Poverty

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the statement by the Prime Minister on 16 June about the merger of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (HC Deb, cols 666–8), what plans they have to ensure that UK Official Development Assistance focuses on the eradication of poverty. [[HL6033](#)]

Baroness Sugg: On 16 June the Prime Minister announced that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development will merge to form a new international department – the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The Government remains committed to the target of spending 0.7 percent of national income on Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is enshrined in law, and the UK continues to abide by internationally agreed rules on what constitutes ODA.

We will continue to be guided by our responsibilities under the International Development Act, including a commitment to poverty reduction. As the PM has said, the work of UK aid to reduce poverty will remain central to the new department's mission.

The Integrated Review, expected to conclude later in the year, will define the Government's ambition for the UK's role in the world and its outcomes will shape the objectives for the new department, including for ODA.

Pakistan: Religious Freedom

*Asked by **Lord Alton of Liverpool***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Pakistan about freedom of religion or belief in view of reports that that government's State Minister for Parliamentary Affairs has voiced support for an anti-Ahmadiyya twitter campaign by calling for Ahmadis to be punished by death. [[HL5971](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains deeply concerned by reports of discrimination and violence against Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan. We are concerned by language that may incite violence against any religious or ethnic groups.

We continue to urge the Government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of its citizens, regardless of their belief. I raised the UK Government's concerns about the protection of the Ahmadiyya community with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 27 February and our concerns about the comments made by the Pakistan Minister of State on 5 June. I then raised our concerns again about Freedom of Religion or Belief with Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights by letter on 5 June. I also raised the UK Government's concerns about the protection of the Ahmadiyya community, including

comments made by the Pakistan Minister of State, with Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, His Excellency Nafees Zakaria, on 12 and 27 May. The British High Commissioner to Pakistan met Pakistan's Minister for Human Rights on 8 June and raised our concerns about Freedom of Religion or Belief in Pakistan, including the comments made by the Pakistan Minister of State.

Palestinians: Elections

*Asked by **Baroness Tonge***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by the Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 12 June (HC55145), what discussions have they had with the Palestinian Authority about the holding of elections in the West Bank and Gaza. [\[HL6096\]](#)

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza and we continue to encourage the reconciliation process in which the PA resumes control of Gaza and restores effective and accountable governance. Genuine and democratic national elections for all Palestinians, are crucial to the establishment of a viable and sovereign Palestinian State. To this end, we call on all Palestinian factions to seek common ground and to work together to pursue a positive path towards democracy for the full benefit of the Palestinian people.

Parking: Pedestrian Areas

*Asked by **Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to deter parking on pavements. [\[HL6046\]](#)

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Local authorities already have legal powers to restrict pavement parking. The Government intends to carry out a public consultation later in the year, on further possible options to help local authorities tackle pavement parking. The consultation will fill evidence gaps, seek views on specific options that were raised by the Transport Select Committee and call for alternative ideas. Ministers will take decisions on next steps in the light of the consultation responses.

Plastic Bags: Fees and Charges

*Asked by **Lord Hayward***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park on 26 March (HL2548), whether they have published the revised impact assessment agreed by the Regulatory Policy Committee; if so, (1) where it is published, and (2) whether they clearly identified the differences between the original and the revised version. [\[HL6000\]](#)

*Asked by **Lord Hayward***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the impact of the

introduction of a plastic bag charge for small and medium-sized retailers; and when they intend to publicise their plans for the introduction of that charge. [\[HL6001\]](#)

Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park: The Government will publish the revised impact assessment on extending the carrier bag charge to small and medium-sized retailers, which has been assessed as fit for purpose by the Regulatory Policy Committee, alongside the summary of the responses to the consultation and the Government response setting out next steps. We intend to publish these documents shortly.

Post Office: Accounting Officers

*Asked by **Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom***

To ask Her Majesty's Government who has held the post of Accounting Officer with responsibility for the Post Office since 1 January 2000, and what were their dates of service in that role. [\[HL5972\]](#)

Lord Callanan: The Principal Account Officer (PAO) responsible for the Post Office is the Permanent Secretary of the respective department that holds the shareholding of Post Office Ltd (POL). Before its separation in 2012, POL was part of Royal Mail Group. This would be the Permanent Secretaries from the following departments:

Department for Trade & Industry (2000 – 2007).

Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (2007 – 2009).

Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (2009 – 2016).

Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (2016 – Present).

*Asked by **Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what are the responsibilities of the Accounting Officer with responsibility for the Post Office. [\[HL5973\]](#)

Lord Callanan: The responsibilities of Principal Accounting Officers (PAOs) are set out in Managing Public Money. For Post Office Ltd. (POL) the PAO is the BEIS Permanent Secretary.

Specifically, the PAO is accountable to Parliament in respect of POL and for ensuring that arrangements are in place for shareholder oversight of POL. The PAO is also responsible for advising the responsible Minister, including in areas such as:

(i) an appropriate framework of objectives and targets for POL in the light of BEIS's wider strategic aims and priorities;

(ii) an appropriate allocation of BEIS' budget for POL in the light of BEIS's overall expenditure priorities; and

(iii) how well POL is achieving its strategic objectives and if it is delivering Value for.

Asked by Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any significant initiatives, policies, programmes or projects of the Post Office were overseen by the Government since 1 January 2000; and if so, what they were and how were they managed. [HL5974]

Lord Callanan: The Government has not overseen any specific project at the Post Office. It is important that the company is allowed to run as an independent, commercial business, albeit in compliance with the principles set out in Managing Public Money.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy has appointed a Non-Executive Director (NED) on the POL Board since its separation from Royal Mail in 2012. From 2014 onwards this role has been performed by UKGI (previously the Shareholder Executive).

Before 2012, there was no representation at Board level (within Royal Mail Group). The Shareholder Executive provided a monitoring function and reported to the relevant department (BEIS, BIS, BERR and DTI).

The BEIS Permanent Secretary has some key controls of the Post Office – namely approval of the annual business plan, some financing aspects of the company and approval of any specific commitments above £50m.

Asked by Lord Arbuthnot of Edrom

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Accounting Officer with responsibility for the Post Office has played any role in advising ministers on the Government's policy in relation to (1) the faults in Horizon software; (2) the treatment by the Post Office of sub-postmasters in relation to allegations of alleged criminal behaviour by sub-postmasters; (3) the sub-postmasters' litigation against the Post Office; and (4) the establishment of the review into the Horizon issues. [HL5975]

Lord Callanan: The Principal Accounting Officer (PAO) responsible for Post Office Ltd. (POL) is the BEIS Permanent Secretary.

Issues regarding POL's IT system and its relationship with postmasters are operational matters in which the PAO and Ministers relied on information provided by POL senior management.

Following the Common Issues Judgment in March 2019, POL advised Ministers that it intended to change its approach to the litigation. This included changes to the POL legal team and strategy, and ultimately led to the successful mediation in December 2019.

The Independent Review into Post Office and the issues highlighted by the litigation was approved within Government at all levels, including by the BEIS Permanent Secretary.

Pregnancy: Employment*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to support pregnant women who have been unable to work during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6085]

Lord Callanan: We expect employers to do the right thing to support the wellbeing of their staff generally, and to pay particular attention to those who may be more vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak, including pregnant women.

If employers cannot provide a safe working environment for pregnant women, they will be able to access a range of government support: this includes the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for employees who have previously been furloughed for a full three-week period prior to 30 June, the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme and the £8bn that has been injected into our welfare system to improve the safety net.

Procurement: Coronavirus*Asked by Lord Haskel*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on the transmission of COVID-19 by reducing the use of paper in supply chains; and whether the regulations on (1) e-signatures, and (2) e-transactions, apply to every aspect of a supply chain. [HL6128]

Lord Callanan: According to the World Health Organisation, the likelihood of an infected person contaminating commercial goods is low and the risk of catching the virus that causes COVID-19 from a package, including paper package, that has been moved, travelled, and exposed to different conditions and temperate is also low.

The Government has endorsed the conclusions reached in the Law Commission's report *Electronic Execution of Documents* that the existing legal framework in England and Wales makes clear that businesses and individuals can feel confident in using e-signatures in commercial transactions.

Repossession Orders*Asked by Baroness Altmann*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that courts deal more speedily with landlord and tenant cases concerning anti-social behaviour and domestic violence, once possession cases related to rented housing recommence. [HL5963]

Lord Keen of Elie: The listing of court cases, including possession, is a judicial function. The Master of Rolls has set up a judiciary-led cross-sector working

group to consider and address matters affecting litigants to inform arrangements that will be in place when the current stay on possession is lifted. The work of this group will consider the needs of all users involved in the possession process.

*Asked by **Baroness Altmann***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many possession orders had been made by the courts following a claim by (1) private, and (2) social landlords, and were outstanding prior to eviction proceedings being suspended from 27 March. [HL5964]

Lord Keen of Elie: The requested information is not held by HMCTS.

Small Businesses: Grants and Loans

*Asked by **Lord Fox***

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many grants and loans have been (1) applied for by, and (2) paid to, new and existing recipients from (a) the £750 million targeted support fund announced on 20 April for the most R&D intensive SMEs, and (b) the £40 million Fast Start investment scheme announced on 20 May; and what is the total value of these grants and loans. [HL5993]

Lord Callanan: I refer the noble Lord to the answer given to the hon. Member for Feltham and Heston by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (the Minister for Science, Research and Innovation) on 17th June 2020 to Question 57218.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Answer to Question 57218 [Question 57218.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-22/HL5993>

Social Distancing: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Scriven***

To ask Her Majesty's Government who has the authority to authorise the imposition of any COVID-19 related restriction of movement in a district of a local authority area; and under which powers they have would such authority. [HL5719]

Lord Bethell: Decisions will be made primarily using existing public health routes. These roles will be set out in each locality's COVID-19 Local Outbreak Plans.

Roles in the plans will differ depending on the structure of the local authority and the different scenarios it will cover. They will rely on leadership from the local Director of Public Health for professional advice, the local authority Chief Executive for a strategic overview across health, economy and social issues, and local councillors for their community leadership role.

Social Security Benefits

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

To ask Government how many claims there have been for (1) contributory Job Seeker's Allowance, and (2) contributory Employment and Support Allowance, in each quarter since January 2014. [HL5028]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: Quarterly data on the number of a) Jobseeker's Allowance claimants by benefit entitlement, and b) Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) caseload by phase of ESA claim and payment type, from February 2014 to November 2019 are given in the spreadsheet attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

HL5028 attachment [Copy of HL5028 Attachment.xlsx]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-02/HL5028>

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

To ask Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 4 June (HL4841), whether those who are not already in receipt of an 'exempt benefit' but who are in the process of claiming one will be subject to the benefit cap. [HL5691]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: New claims for benefits which could provide an exemption to the Benefit Cap for an eligible household continue to be taken and processed, as such an exemption will apply once benefit entitlement is established.

Claimants can approach their Local Authority for a Discretionary Housing Payment if they need additional help to meet rental costs.

Social Security Benefits: Children

*Asked by **The Lord Bishop of Durham***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the call by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Save the Children to increase the child component of Universal Credit and Child Tax Credits by £20 a week, following their research showing that 7 in 10 families with children in receipt of Universal Credit are cutting back on essentials as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5845]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: This Government has introduced an unprecedented package of welfare support of over £6.5 billion to help families cope with the financial impact of COVID-19. This has included increases to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit worth up to £1,040 this financial year. In addition, we have increased Local Housing Allowance, lifting rates to the 30th percentile in the Private Rented Sector, putting an average of £600 into people's pockets.

Local Authorities in England will now be able to use the £500 million Hardship Fund announced at the Spring

Budget, to help working people on Local Council Tax Support to provide additional help to vulnerable people locally through arrangements such as Local Welfare Schemes. On 10 June, it was announced that we are now providing £63 million in additional funding to local authorities in England to help people who find themselves in severe financial difficulties, through local welfare assistance programmes.

Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 1 June (HL4513), what assessment they have made of whether the COVID-19 pandemic would constitute an appropriate point to conduct a review of the benefits cap. [HL5031]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There are currently no plans to change the benefit cap. The Benefit Cap restores fairness between those receiving out-of-work benefits and taxpayers.

Surgery: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to reschedule any NHS operations postponed in England following the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6133]

Lord Bethell: Whilst routine hospital treatments were suspended to provide capacity to treat COVID-19 patients, we are now working closely with the National Health Service and other partners to restart these in a safe way. Guidance has already been issued on this, and approaches are being tailored at local level according to local capacity and local demand, with the most urgent services being restarted first. Guidance also outlines that contracted independent sector hospital and diagnostic capacity should also be used in the restarting of routine elective procedures.

Transport: Hydrogen

Asked by Lord Bradshaw

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the potential impact on the economy of using hydrogen to power transport. [HL5979]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: Government's approach to delivering greener transport is technology neutral and we have provided support for hydrogen as a transport fuel where the market favours its use. For road transport this includes support through the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation, the £23m Hydrogen for Transport Programme, £2m Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle support scheme and funding for the purchase of 62 hydrogen fuel cell buses. Across road, rail, maritime and aviation Government is supporting research and development into hydrogen technologies recognising its potential to be a key fuel on the pathway to zero emissions.

UK Relations With EU: Galileo System

Asked by Lord West of Spithead

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the EU on access to Galileo as part of negotiations on the future UK-EU relationship. [HL4882]

Lord True: The UK and the EU discussed the Galileo programme during the Withdrawal Agreement negotiations. The EU's offer then on Galileo did not meet the UK's defence and industrial requirements.

UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Government how many military personnel are involved in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA); how many of MINUSMA military personnel are from the UK; where in Mali MINUSMA is deployed; what is the total cost of MINUSMA; and how the effectiveness and success of MINUSMA will be assessed. [HL5446]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: MINUSMA's mandate in Mali is country-wide. Further information on the forthcoming UK deployment to MINUSMA can be found at [GOV.UK/Government/News/uk-to-deploy-250-troops-to-mali-on-peacekeeping-operations](https://gov.uk/Government/News/uk-to-deploy-250-troops-to-mali-on-peacekeeping-operations) and at peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/minusma.

Wang Quanzhang

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the claims of the Chinese human rights lawyer, Wang Quanzhang, that he was tortured during a four-year prison sentence, kept under 24-hour surveillance by two armed police officers within his prison cell, and was forced into making a false confession; what representations they have made to the government of China about his reported treatment; and what response they have received. [HL6106]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We have directly raised our concerns about the detention, mistreatment, and harassment of Wang Quanzhang on multiple occasions with the Chinese Government, and raised the case during China's last Universal Periodic Review. The Foreign Secretary raised human rights concerns with his Chinese counterpart, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, on both 9 March and 8 June.

Welfare Assistance Schemes

Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether local authorities that no longer operate a welfare assistance scheme will receive a share of the funding uplift

announced on 11 June; what plans they have to monitor (1) the allocation by, and (2) the number of applications to, and grants made by, local authorities in regard to those funds; and what plans they have to publish that information. [HL6012]

Lord Gardiner of Kimble: Local authorities which no longer operate a welfare assistance scheme may receive a share of the funding, the proportion of which will be based on the agreed allocation model. We are taking a proportionate approach to monitoring. Details of this approach will be outlined in the guidance which we will issue to local authorities in receipt of this funding. We plan to publish monitoring and evaluation evidence in line with Government guidance and subject to approval by all relevant parties.

Xinjiang: Birth Rate

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of reports that the decline in birth-rates among the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region's ethnic minority communities may indicate the promotion of a coercive birth-prevention strategy targeted at ethnoreligious minority groups; and whether any such targeted coercive policy would require the UK Government to consider their obligations, as a signatory to the 1948 Convention on the Crime of Genocide, to prevent, protect, and hold to account perpetrators. [HL6103]

Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of forced sterilisation, mass incarceration, indoctrination, extrajudicial detention, invasive surveillance, forced labour, and the destruction of Uyghur cultural sites, including cemeteries, what plans they have to table a resolution at the UN General Assembly to seek the establishment of an independent international body to investigate the situation in Xinjiang and to pursue appropriate judicial means to make a determination regarding reported crimes against humanity and genocide in Xinjiang with a view to bringing perpetrators of any such crimes to justice. [HL6104]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We are aware of these reports. We continue to call on China to allow the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights unfettered access to the region to better understand the situation. I did so publicly during the UK's national statement at the Human Rights Council on 25 February.

More broadly, we are seriously concerned about the human rights situation in Xinjiang including the extrajudicial detention of over a million Uyghur Muslims and other minorities in "political re-education camps", systematic restrictions on Uyghur culture and the practice of Islam, and extensive and invasive surveillance targeting minorities. On 10 March at the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council, the UK raised concerns about systematic human rights violations and reports of forced labour in Xinjiang during our 'Item 4' statement.

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