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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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

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

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## Written Statements

Wednesday, 8 July 2020

### Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review

[HLWS340]

**Lord Bethell:** My Hon Friend the Minister of State (Minister for Patient Safety, Suicide Prevention and Mental Health) (Nadine Dorries) has made the following written statement:

I am today informing the House of the publication of the report of the Independent Medicines and Medical Devices Safety Review, chaired by Baroness Cumberlege.

I would like to thank Baroness Cumberlege for her dedication to listening to the experiences of patients and their families. She has acted with compassion and thoroughness and gone to great lengths to ensure that those who have felt unheard have had a voice. She has also been diligent in looking across the system at possible improvements.

The Government also thanks those very same patients and their families who have contributed their time and energy to the Review. We know that in some cases it has been a physical and psychological challenge to attend the meetings that the review set up.

The Review was commissioned by the Government in February 2018 and its terms of reference required it to explore how the health system responds when patients and their families raise concerns about the safety of treatments.

While the Review has progressed, the Government and the NHS has already taken a number of steps that are relevant to the issues the Review raises. However, there is always more we can do to make the NHS systems more responsive to peoples' concerns when they are first raised.

It is imperative for the sake of patients that we now give the recommendations from this independent review the full consideration they deserve.

I can assure you that patient safety remains a key priority for the government and we are committed to the NHS being the safest healthcare system in the world.

I will give an Oral Statement in Parliament.

A copy of the report will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

### Park Homes

[HLWS341]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** My Hon. Friend, the Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing (Luke Hall) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement:

I am today publishing the Government response to our consultation "Mobile Homes – a fit and proper person test for park home sites". I am placing copies of the response in the libraries of the House, and it will also be available on gov.uk.

As part of our ongoing commitment to improving protections for park home residents, the Government undertook a two-part review of park homes legislation in 2017. In the response published on 22 October 2018, we committed to introduce the fit and proper person test, subject to a technical consultation. This consultation was undertaken between 25 July and 17 September 2019 and received 370 responses, the majority of which were highly supportive.

The purpose of the test is to improve the management of park home and other residential caravan sites. By introducing an assessment that the person responsible for managing the site is suitable to do so and of good character, this will help target and remove the worst offenders from the sector. The test will be an important tool for Local Authority enforcement and marks an important milestone in my department's work to protect residents of park homes and other residential caravan sites, who are often elderly and vulnerable, from unscrupulous site owners.

I am today laying the required regulations bringing the test into effect. They will mandate that:

- each local authority must set up and maintain a register of people who are fit and proper to manage a park home site in their area. A site owner, or an appointed manager, must appear on the local authority register in order to manage a site;
- when an applicant applies for registration, a local authority must consider, among other details, the applicant's criminal record and details of all sites in which the applicant has an equitable interest; and
- if convicted of any offences under the Regulations the site owner would face an unlimited fine. Offences include operating a site without being on the local authority register, breaching the conditions attached to an entry on the register, and providing false information in an application.

The regulations will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure so will require the approval of both Houses.

The Government is dedicated to improving protections for park home residents and these regulations are an important step towards delivering on that commitment.

## Written Answers

Wednesday, 8 July 2020

### Airports: Non-domestic Rates

Asked by *Lord Shipley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to mirror the provision by the Scottish Government and Northern Ireland Executive of business rates relief for one year during the COVID-19 pandemic to airports; and why airports in England and Wales have not yet been included in that scheme. [HL6139]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** Business rates and any reliefs are devolved in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has published guidance for local authorities in England on eligible properties. As set out in the guidance, support is targeted at premises that are wholly or mainly being used as shops, restaurants, cafes, drinking establishments, cinemas and live music venues; for assembly and leisure; or as hotels, guest and boarding premises and self-catering accommodation. It is for local authorities to determine eligibility for reliefs, having regard to guidance issued by the Government.

A range of further measures to support all businesses, including those not eligible for the business rates holiday, such as airports, has also been made available.

### Allotments

Asked by *Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to implementing the recommendations of the report by the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Select Committee *The Future for Allotments* (HC 560-I, Session 1997–98); and, in particular, the proposal that decisions over commercial use of allotment gardens relating to site shops and sales of surplus produce should be made on a site-by-site basis. [HL6111]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The report referred to was produced under a previous government. Decisions to permit the limited sale of surplus produce are the responsibility of local authorities who set their own rules on the use of sites.

### Department of Health and Social Care: Written Questions

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 30 June (HL3582), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, who gave the advice on behalf of Public Health England about permitting the football match between

Liverpool and Atlético Madrid on 11 March; and which Ministers were involved in assessing that advice. [HL6277]

**Baroness Barran:** The decisions regarding mass events and wider measures were taken in line with public health guidance at COBR. DCMS Ministers discussed mass events with the Chief Medical Officer and Deputy Chief Medical Officer in advance of these meetings.

### Disease Control: Research

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times the cross-Government director-level governance board referred to in the UK Biological Security Strategy met between July 2018 and July 2019. [HL5984]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The UK Biological Security Strategy Governance Board met in December 2018 and July 2019 during this period. The Governance Board is supported and informed by the Biological Security Strategy Working Group which has met twelve times, the most recent meeting was in March 2020.

Asked by *Lord Browne of Ladyton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Threats, Hazards, Resilience and Contingencies sub-committee of the National Security Council has met to consider a report from the cross-Government director-level governance board referred to in the UK Biological Security Strategy; and if so, when. [HL5985]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The focus since publication has been on developing and normalising the governance structure, building a biological security community, and mapping current departmental biological security related workstreams and a first cross-government report is in its final drafting stages. The THRC was a former sub-Committee of the National Security Council up until July 2019 and no longer sits anymore. We do not comment on specific National Security Council Agenda items.

### Female Genital Mutilation

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the challenges and barriers experienced by the UK in relation to measures to prevent female genital mutilation, including the use of protection orders to minimize the risk of exposure of women and girls at risk of mutilation when travelling outside the UK. [HL5970]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** FGM is a crime and it is child abuse. We will not tolerate a practice that can cause extreme and lifelong physical and psychological suffering to women and girls.

The Government significantly strengthened the law in 2015 to improve protection for victims and those at risk,

and to break down the barriers to prosecution. The Government has: introduced a new offence of failing to protect a girl from FGM; extended the reach of extra territorial offences; introduced lifelong anonymity for victims of FGM; introduced civil FGM Protection Orders (FGMPOs); and introduced a mandatory reporting duty for known cases in under 18s.

FGMPOs are being used to good effect, with 547 being granted since their introduction in 2015 to the end of December 2019.

In 2019, the Home Office held a series of roadshows across England and Wales to train professionals in the use of FGM and Forced Marriage Protection Orders. Around 1,300 professionals attended these events, which raised awareness of the scope and effectiveness of the orders and encouraged professionals to always consider them in any safeguarding plans.

We continue to provide free resources on FGM for frontline professionals, including: an online resource pack, e-learning, statutory multi-agency guidance and a range of communication materials.

### Food Supply

*Asked by Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to increasing support for local food webs to improve food security. [HL6112]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** The UK has a high degree of food security built on access to a range of sources including robust supply chains across a range of countries, in addition to strong domestic production. Strong domestic food production is only one part of our food security. We supplement our produce with fruits, vegetables and other products that are difficult to grow and rear here.

The Government recognises the value of local food chains as over half of the food that the UK population consumes is domestically produced. Defra works with a range of local companies and regional food groups to champion local food and highlight the qualities of British food products, such as meat, dairy, and vegetables, as well as fish caught in UK waters. We are proud of our great British food and drink, and the farmers and other producers who provide us all with a reliable and sustainable food supply, renowned for its quality and underpinned by high standards of food safety, traceability and animal welfare.

The Government recognises the important role played by community shops and the vital part they play in many rural communities in supporting vulnerable groups. Defra has been in contact with local authorities and volunteer groups to help prioritise those individuals to access essential food by, among other things, being able to contact smaller food retailers. We recognise and are very grateful for all the work that community shops have done in recent weeks, helping to ensure that people have the food they need.

The Government has asked Henry Dimbleby to lead an Independent Review of the food chain, to develop recommendations to shape a National Food Strategy. It is the intention that this strategy should address major challenges including food security.

### Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office: Developing Countries

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have in place (1) to safeguard, and (2) to maintain, the experience and expertise in international development of staff from the Department for International Development with their own dedicated administrative structure within the new merged department of the Department for International Development and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, (a) in the UK, and (b) in its operations overseas. [HL6169]

**Baroness Sugg:** The creation of the new Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office will bring together the best of what we do in aid and diplomacy and create new opportunities for staff. The ambition, vision and expertise of DFID staff will be at the heart of the new department – taking forward the work of UK aid, which will remain central to our mission. There will be no compulsory redundancies and we will work closely with staff throughout the process of implementing the merger. The full details of the merger, including the structure of the new department, will be set out in due course. This work will take place over the coming months, and we will engage fully with staff throughout this process.

### Foster Care: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to (1) encourage people to become foster carers, and (2) support foster carers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6088]

**Baroness Berridge:** It is vital that local authorities can find the right carers in the right places at the right time to meet the needs of vulnerable children. To help unlock fostering capacity during the COVID-19 outbreak, we have made amendments to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (2010) England Regulations 2010 and the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. These changes aim to make it easier to identify potential placements, particularly in emergency situations, and so that new foster carers can be assessed and approved without unnecessary delay.

We know that some foster families have faced unprecedented challenges as a direct result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Our priority is to protect foster families, to keep them together and continue to offer safety and stability to the vulnerable children they care for. That is why we have committed £125,000 over the next four

months to fund a new FosterlinePlus service. Foster families experiencing difficulties will have free access to a range of specialist one-to-one services and new and prospective foster families will be able to access the support and information they need to offer caring homes for some of our most vulnerable children.

More widely, the department has commissioned behavioural insights research, which commenced in November 2019, to explore the barriers and motivations of prospective carers and seek recommendations for more targeted approaches in local recruitment. We will share these findings with fostering services and recruitment managers.

We continue to identify ways to celebrate the invaluable roles that foster families play in supporting our most vulnerable children, for example, by celebrating exceptional foster families through the Honours system. We supported the Fostering Network's Foster Care Fortnight in May 2020 through social media channels. We also recently launched updated fostering pages on GOV.UK to make information more accessible to potential carers, which are available here: <https://www.gov.uk/becoming-foster-parent>.

### Further Education: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to enable colleges to reopen safely; and what assessment they have made of the remarks by the Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges that colleges face a £2 billion income loss next year and some will go bankrupt unless they receive emergency help. [HL6129]

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why colleges were not included in the £1 billion student catch-up programme. [HL6130]

**Baroness Berridge:** Many further education providers are already open for 16 to 19 learners on the first year of a two-year study programme and all learners under 19 years old can be offered a face-to-face meeting before the end of the summer term - subject to the required safety measures being met. Our guidance on how to phase the return of learners in further education is underpinned by our latest understanding of COVID-19 and we will continue to be led by the scientific evidence.

From Autumn 2020, all learners, including those who are 16 to 19 and adults will return to a full high-quality education programme delivered by their college or post 16 learning provider. This is as well as continuing to re-introduce face to-face support for 16 to 19 learners who are:

- in their first year of a study programme
- taking their exams next year

Colleges should plan on the basis that, from September 2020, all learners will return to a full high-quality education programme.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will continue to pay grant funded providers their scheduled monthly profiled payments for the remainder of the 2019/20 funding year and for 2020/21 which should give colleges the security of their agreed funding allocations. For colleges that are experiencing significant financial difficulties, the existing support arrangements remain in place, including short-term emergency funding. The further education commissioner and his highly experienced team are able to talk through plans, concerns and issues as are local ESFA teams.

My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced a £1 billion support package for schools to help pupils catch up on lost teaching time. It is our ambition that all students have the chance to make up for lost education and where breaks in learning have been required, we want to ensure learners can resume their 'classroom' learning and continue to a successful completion. We will continue to work with the sector to establish the best way to support students to make up for the disruption due to COVID-19.

### Hate Crime: LGBT People

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the level of hate crimes against the LGBTQ+ community; what analysis they have carried out regarding such crimes; whether they have identified any trends; and if so, what they are. [HL6025]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office collects and publishes statistics annually on the number of hate crime offences recorded by the police in England and Wales, broken down by five centrally monitored strands: race, religion, sexual orientation, disability and transgender identity.

The Home Office routinely work with civil society partners, including those working on LGBTQ+ issues, to understand hate crime trends. The latest Home Office data on recorded crime in relation to all protected characteristics, including prevalence and trends, is available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/839172/hate-crime-1819-hosb2419.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/839172/hate-crime-1819-hosb2419.pdf)

### Health: Pets

*Asked by Lord Black of Brentwood*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cats as Companions, published 15 June; and what assessment they have made of the benefits to people's health and wellbeing of owning or interacting with pets, including cats. [HL6207]

**Baroness Barran:** I welcomed this report at the time of publication, and you can see my quote here:

<http://www.apgocats.co.uk/reports/>. The report ‘Cats as Companions: Can Cats Help Tackle Loneliness?’ from the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Cats rightly outlines the complex nature of loneliness and the importance of tailoring interventions to an individual’s needs. The government welcomes the interest in the important issue of loneliness. It will continue to work to tackle loneliness and improve the evidence base on the causes and the best ways to reduce it.

### Helicopters: Greater London

*Asked by Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have plans to reduce the noise made by police and ambulance helicopters circling over London during the weekends. [HL6008]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The decision of when to deploy helicopters over London is an operational matter for the police and the London Air Ambulance.

The London Air Ambulance only operates during daylight hours due to operational reasons and this reduces noise during night time hours.

The National Police Air Service (NPAS) provides aircraft, including helicopters, and in London, NPAS responds to requests for support predominately from the Metropolitan Police Service but also British Transport Police and the City of London Police.

NPAS deploys helicopters after completing a threat, harm and risk assessment; and only deploy them when necessary. In 2019 a total of 3727 calls for service were delivered to the Metropolitan Police Service or City of London Police, an average of 10 per day.

The existing fleet of aircraft are compliant with regulation [International Civil Aviation Authority, Chapter 8 noise, Chapter 8 and Annex 16] and are amongst the quietest within their category.

### History: Curriculum

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to diversify the curriculum in schools to include a broader range of culture heritage history. [HL6093]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department is committed to an inclusive education system which recognises and embraces diversity. 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 specific 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.

We want to support all young people to be happy, healthy and safe. We also want to equip them for adult life and to make a positive contribution to society. Schools are required to actively promote fundamental British values, including democracy as well as the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those of different faith and beliefs. As part of a broad and balanced curriculum in history, pupils should be taught about different societies, and how different groups have contributed to the development of Britain.

### Homelessness: Finance

*Asked by Baroness Royall of Blaisdon*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will provide details about how local authorities and charities can access the £105 million funding announced for addressing homelessness. [HL6179]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Nearly 15,000 vulnerable people have been housed in emergency accommodation, including hotels, since the start of the COVID-19 emergency, according to returns from local authorities. This includes people coming in directly from the streets, people previously housed in shared night shelters and people who have become vulnerable to rough sleeping during the pandemic.

The 24 June announcement that we are providing local authorities with a further £105 million to enable them to best support those placed into emergency accommodation during the pandemic reflects our commitment to ensure that as few of these people return to the streets as possible. With this included, the overall amount of Government funding specifically spent on rough sleeping and homelessness this year is over half a billion pounds.

We are currently working to finalise the process by which local areas can access this funding as quickly as possible. With various streams of funding becoming available, we want to ensure that the process for local areas to set out their plans for next steps and recovery is coherent and focussed on both short and long-term outcomes for rough sleepers. Further information on the process to allocate funding will be developed with partners and published in due course.

Further information on the process to allocate funding will be developed with partners and published in due course.

### Housing: Sales

*Asked by Lord Lee of Trafford*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was (1) the total number of principal residences sold last year, and (2) the aggregate capital value of any such sales. [HL6171]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** This information is not available because principal private residences are mainly exempt from Capital Gains Tax, and hence these details do not have to be reported to HMRC.

However, information is available from Stamp Duty Land Tax (SDLT) returns data, which is focused on the purchaser and type of property, including the consideration amount. The figure will include properties that are new builds and non-private residences (e.g. landlords). HMRC publish this information as Official Statistics in their Annual Stamp Taxes Publication. The latest figures are below:

Financial Year	Residential		
	Number of transaction (Thousands)	Estimated property Value (£ Millions)	Receipts (£ Millions)
2006-07	1,700	344,490	6,375
2007-08	1,532	330,465	6,680
2008-09	814	167,945	2,950
2009-10	898	188,350	3,290
2010-11	881	205,365	4,040
2011-12	917	209,355	4,215
2012-13	928	215,180	4,905
2013-14	1,131	269,835	6,450
2014-15	1,207	304,155	7,500
2015-16	1,184	321,530	7,310
2016-17	1,094	300,295	8,590
2017-18	1,106	315,060	9,275
2018-19	1,036	300,040	8,370

It should be noted that SDLT ceased to apply in Scotland in April 2015, and in Wales in April 2018.

### Lake District National Park Authority

Asked by **Lord Campbell-Savours**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the date on which all rules that currently apply to the actions of members of the Lake District National Park Authority were approved by a Secretary of State. [HL6117]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** National Park Authority members are selected by constituent local authorities or parish councils or are appointed by the Secretary of State following open competition. All members appointed by the Secretary of State are governed by the Cabinet Office's Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies. This sets out the personal and professional standards expected from non-executive board members of UK public bodies and forms part of their terms of appointment. The latest version of the Code of Conduct for Board Members of Public Bodies was published on GOV.UK in June 2019 and can found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/code-of-conduct-for-board-members-of-public-bodies>.

### Leisure: Finance

Asked by **Lord Greaves**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by ukactive and Community Leisure UK that nearly half of all public leisure centres could close permanently between now and the end of the year due to an estimated shortfall of over £800 million; and what steps they will take to prevent this from happening. [HL6306]

**Baroness Barran:** Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. The Government has made it clear that it will adopt a phased approach based on scientific and medical advice, and that the primary goal is to protect public health.

The Government is in discussions with representatives from the sport and physical activity sector about the steps required to restart grassroots sport and will update the public when it is deemed safe to reopen sports venues. Grassroots sports facilities like leisure centres are also important parts of their communities and deliver vital health and wellbeing benefits.

The income scheme announced on Thursday 2 July by the Secretary of State for Local Government, aims to support local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income from sales, fees and charge which they had reasonably budgeted for. Further guidance will follow on the principle of the scheme.

### Mortality Rates

Asked by **Lord Kennedy of Southwark**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the possible reasons for the excess deaths in the UK since 1 March in which the cause of death was not recorded as COVID-19. [HL6132]

**Lord True:** The information requested falls under the remit of the UK Statistics Authority. I have therefore asked the Authority to respond.

Dear Lord Kennedy,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what assessment has made of the possible reasons for the excess deaths in the UK since 1 March in which the cause of death was not recorded as COVID-19 (HL6132).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) has investigated deaths not recorded as due to COVID-19 for England and Wales extensively, and published their findings on the website. The analysis presents excess deaths by age, sex, region of England, place of death and cause of death. Possible explanations for trends are put forward, and the extent to which weekly deaths registrations data support or contradict each suggestion is

assessed. The main points of this analysis are outlined below:

- Between 7 March and 1 May, a total of 130,009 deaths were registered across England and Wales. This is an excess of 46,380 death registrations compared to the five-year average. 12,900 of these deaths (27.8%) did not involve COVID-19.
- The ONS' article is based on 98.1% of the total deaths registered and 43,903 excess deaths, because a small proportion of deaths take longer to be fully coded and validated for analysis.
- Non-COVID-19 excess deaths occur predominantly in older age groups, to a greater extent with increasing age, and especially for the frail elderly with underlying conditions. Undiagnosed COVID-19 could help explain the rise in these deaths.
- In the period from week ending 13 March to week ending 1 May, over 8,000 fewer deaths were registered in hospitals, which is a 20.9% decrease in comparison to the corresponding period in the five-year average. In contrast, almost 11,000 more deaths (an increase of 60.5%) were registered in care homes, and over 8,000 more deaths (an increase of 42.6%) were registered in private homes,
- In the same period, the largest increases in non-COVID-19 deaths compared to the five-year average are seen in deaths due to 'dementia and Alzheimer disease' (5,404 excess deaths, an increase of 52.2%) and 'symptoms, signs and ill-defined conditions', which indicates old age and frailty (1,567 excess deaths, an increase of 77.8%). Together, these comprise two thirds of total non-COVID-19 excess deaths in this period.
- Deaths due to causes such as asthma and diabetes increased up to the week ending 24 April and occurred increasingly outside hospital. This could suggest that a delay in care for these conditions is leading to an increase in deaths, although it could also be related to undiagnosed COVID-19.
- Changes to death registration processes implemented in the Coronavirus Act 2020 have led to an increased number of death registrations made by doctors, increasing registration efficiency overall. At present, it is not clear whether increased efficiency is a cause or result of an increase in weekly registrations, but some further effects may become apparent in the future for conditions where deaths have a longer registration delay.
- The other theories investigated were reduced hospital capacity, and increases in deaths caused by stress-related conditions, but these cannot explain much of the increase in non-COVID-19 death registrations.

A full analysis of non-COVID-19 excess deaths will only be possible in several months' time when longer-term effects and additional data, both death registrations and other sources, can be considered. This analysis only investigates death registrations in England and Wales, as

the ONS does not hold data on death registrations in the rest of the UK. Given the novel and exploratory nature of this analysis, this report published in early June presented findings about death registrations up to 1 May. This was a stand-alone release, rather than a regular series. We are currently designing a follow-up, however we have no provisional date for release as yet.

The latest information on excess deaths in general are available in our weekly deaths registration data, with latest available for week ending 19 July.

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

## Overseas Aid

*Asked by Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have in place to ensure that UK aid remains party to the Development Assistance committee rules of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on minimum international standards of aid spending. [[HL6170](#)]

**Baroness Sugg:** Spending 0.7 percent of our national income on aid is enshrined in law and the UK continues to abide by the OECD DAC rules for aid. We will continue to look at how this money can be spent most effectively in our national interest, including through the Integrated Review – which will inform the priorities of the new department.

## Pensions

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Social Market Foundation's proposal in Investing in Britain's future: Financing and funding infrastructure after the Coronavirus crisis, published on 15 June, to create pension superfunds to invest in infrastructure and support economic recovery; and when they expect to report on progress made in pension fund consolidation, after consultation with relevant stakeholders. [[HL5871](#)]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** On 18 June, The Pensions Regulator published its interim regime for Defined Benefit pension superfunds, which is effective immediately. This is a significant step in progressing this policy area which has the potential to benefit employers, savers and wider society.

The government recognises the potential large superfunds have to deploy significant capital in the investment markets that could benefit the wider economy. We expect superfunds will operate a well-diversified portfolio which may include investment in suitable infrastructure projects where the long term nature of returns are suited to long term pension liabilities.

A written statement on this subject has now been published and a copy is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Pensions: Interim Guidance for “Superfunds” [House of Lords Written Statement.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-17/HL5871>

## Quarantine: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 22 June (HL5670), what assessment they have made of the likelihood of people travelling to the UK on a weekly basis being infected with COVID-19 compared to those travelling to the UK (1) fortnightly, or (2) frequently but irregularly; what assessment they have made of whether applying quarantine measures to people who travel to and from the UK for work purposes (a) fortnightly, or (b) frequently but irregularly, is in keeping with their approach that those who are unable to work from home and can return to work should do so; and why, with the exemption of weekly travellers, quarantine measures are applied to travellers with no threshold on the period of stay outside the UK. [HL5994]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The additional Health Measures at the Border introduced on 8 June aim to reduce the risk posed by imported cases of Covid-19 to the UK. A small number of groups are exempt from the self-isolation requirement, including those who live outside the UK but work in the UK and travel between their country of residence at least once a week. This exemption is based on the need to maintain peoples' ability to attend their place of work, and not their infection status.

The exemption for those travelling at least once a week ensures that those who live in one country but are employed in another can continue to pursue their employment if they are unable to work from home and can return to work. Opening up this exemption to less frequent travellers risks opening this exemption to wider business-related travel for which it is not intended.

The self-isolation applies to all arrivals, rather than being based on the period of stay outside the UK as the virus has an incubation period where symptoms may not have yet developed.

## Railway Network

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to prioritise schemes to re-open routes closed in the Beeching cuts to promote the levelling up agenda of English regions. [HL6127]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Restoring Your Railway programme prioritises levelling-up and restoring

connections to communities across the country including where lines and stations were closed in the Beeching cuts. The Programme is designed to give opportunities to projects at different phases of development, with three elements: the Ideas Fund, the New Stations fund and advance proposals.

## Railways: North West

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration they have given to include developments to (1) the single-track line between Gannow Junction and Colne to allow more than one train on that section at a time, (2) create a double-track line on the Bolton to Blackburn route, and (3) reinstate the railway line between Colne and Skipton, in the Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands and the north. [HL6126]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** The Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) for the North and Midlands is considering how to integrate and deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 Phase 2b, Midlands Rail Hub and other Major Network Rail enhancement programmes more quickly and efficiently. This work has begun along with a series of regional roundtables on priorities held in June with the HS2 Minister. The IRP will also be informed by a 'Rail Needs Assessment' from the National Infrastructure Commission, who recently held a Call for Evidence.

On the development of a new trans-Pennine rail link via Colne and Skipton, I refer the noble Lord to the answer I gave on 27 May 2020 (HL4359).

## Social Security Benefits: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Stedman-Scott on 24 June (HL5528), what proportion of claimants making (1) successful, and (2) unsuccessful, new claims for Universal Credit since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic have been able (a) also, and (b) instead, to claim (i) contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance, and (ii) contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance, successfully. [HL6230]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** The information requested is not readily available and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

## Swimming Pools: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Greaves*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the importance of public swimming pools for the promotion of recreation, health and public safety, (2) the extent of the threat to many of them due to COVID-19 and funding shortfalls, and (3) the need for Government intervention to prevent their closure. [HL6307]

**Baroness Barran:** The consideration of different venues and the activities involved are underpinned by understanding the risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 associated with particular activities.

We recognise the importance of re-opening our indoor and outdoor pools and we agree that swimming is a great way for people of all ages to stay fit and healthy. There are concerns about transmission around points of contact within such facilities, like changing rooms due to the high volume of contacts. As such, we need to provide reassurance that these facilities will be safe, and are working hard to achieve this as soon as we can.

The Government is actively working towards a safe way to re-open these facilities, with supporting guidance. The income scheme announced on Thursday 2 July by the Secretary of State for Local Government, aims to support local authorities who have incurred irrecoverable loss of income from sales, fees and charge which they had reasonably budgeted for. Further guidance will follow on the principle of the scheme.

## **Veterans: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact on veteran's welfare of the temporary closure of the Veterans UK telephone helpline during the COVID-19 pandemic. [[HL6378](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** The full range of veterans' support services, including the Veterans UK helpline and Welfare Service, has continued to be provided throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 situation necessitated the delivery of helpline services in a different manner and call backs and referral to the Veterans Welfare Service were made where urgent or vulnerable veterans were identified. The Veterans helpline telephony service has now resumed operations.

Veterans UK has helped over 13,000 veterans since 23 March. In addition, approximately 470,000 monthly pension and compensation scheme payments continue to be paid into nominated accounts.

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