

**Session 2019-21**  
**No. 82**



**Thursday**  
**9 July 2020**

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

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<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
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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
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<b>Lord Keen of Elie</b>	Advocate-General for Scotland and Ministry of Justice Spokesperson
<b>Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Whip
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<b>Baroness Sugg</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development
<b>Lord True</b>	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
<b>Baroness Vere of Norbiton</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
<b>Baroness Williams of Trafford</b>	Minister of State, Home Office
<b>Viscount Younger of Leckie</b>	Whip

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# Written Statements

Thursday, 9 July 2020

## Companies House Targets

[HLWS342]

**Lord Callanan:** I have set Companies House the following targets for the year 2020/21:

### Public Targets

Digital services will be available for a minimum of 99.9% of the time.

97% of companies on the register will have an up to date confirmation statement.

We will manage expenditure set out within budgetary limits.

We will be in the top quartile of public service organisations for customer satisfaction.

We will maintain the proportion of external applications from underrepresented groups.

We will withdraw the paper channel for reminders by the end of March 2021.

## Contingencies Fund Advance: Vaccines Programme

[HLWS347]

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

I hereby give notice of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's intention to seek an advance from the contingencies fund totalling £3,360,000 to enable expenditure on Covid-19 vaccines programme to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act.

The funding is urgently required for HM Government to secure manufacturing capability for a possible antibody treatment.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £3,360,000 for this new expenditure will be sought in a Main Estimate for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £3,360,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advances will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent on the Supply and Appropriation Bill.

## Covid-19 Antigen Tests: Tax and National Insurance

[HLWS346]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** My right honourable friend the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Jesse Norman) has today made the following Written Ministerial Statement.

The Government is introducing an income tax exemption and National Insurance (NICs) disregard to ensure that Coronavirus antigen testing provided to employees outside the Government's national testing scheme will not attract tax and NICs liabilities.

The Government recognises the importance of Covid-19 testing. Currently, regular tests are available through the Government testing programme to a wide range of employees, including NHS workers. If an individual is tested through the Government testing programme, no tax liability will arise.

Under normal rules, the provision of a test by an employer to an employee, either directly or by purchasing tests that are carried out by a third party, would constitute a benefit in kind, and the cost of providing the test would be subject to income tax and Class 1A NICs as a result. However, the Government will introduce an exemption to ensure that no tax liabilities arise.

This exemption will ensure that Income Tax and NICs will not be due on employer-provided antigen tests carried out during the current tax year 2020-21.

## Energy Infrastructure Planning Projects

[HLWS343]

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

This Statement concerns an application made by Norfolk Boreas Limited for development consent for the installation, operation and maintenance of the proposed Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm, their related offshore infrastructure off the coast of Norfolk and their related onshore electrical connections within this county.

Under section 98(1) of the Planning Act 2008, the Examining Authority must complete its examination of an application by the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the day after the start day of the examination unless the Secretary of State sets a new deadline under section 98(4) of that Act. Where a new deadline is set, the Secretary of State must make a Statement to Parliament to announce it.

A request has been made by the Planning Inspectorate to extend the examination period - for five months - for the proposed Norfolk Boreas Offshore Wind Farm development. The reasons given for this request were:

- due to Government guidelines in relation to Coronavirus ("COVID-19") several hearings needed to be cancelled, potentially resulting in Interested Parties not being given a fair opportunity to participate in the examination;
- a number of Interested Parties no longer had the capacity to participate in the examination process as a result of COVID-19 resource prioritisation.

Taking these reasons into account and, after careful consideration, the Secretary of State has decided to reset the statutory timescale for the examination as requested.

This means that the examination period is now extended to 12 October 2020.

As a consequence, the date for receipt of the Examining Authority's report to BEIS is extended to 12 January 2021 and the statutory deadline for the Secretary of State's decision is extended to 12 April 2021.

However, mindful of the need to avoid unnecessary delays to the development consent process, the Secretary of State requests the Examining Authority to make best efforts to complete the examination process as soon as is reasonably practicable within the extended period. He has requested that a new timetable for the examination should be published which demonstrates the actions to be taken to complete the examination as quickly as possible in this period. He also expects the Examination Authority to provide his Department with regular updates on progress.

The decision to set the new deadlines for this application is without prejudice to the decision on whether to grant or refuse development consent.

## Health Transformation Programme Update

[HLWS345]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** My honourable Friend the Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work (Justin Tomlinson MP) has made the following Written Statement.

I would like to update the House on the Department's plans and progress, under the Health Transformation Programme, to reform assessment services for Employment and Support Allowance, Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Owing to Covid-19, we have had to review our commercial approach and our revised approach is set out below.

There is no change to our ambition: the Government remains committed to developing a transformed service that will support those with disabilities and health conditions, through:

- the creation of a single, integrated health assessment service;
- a single digital platform developed by DWP;
- developing this new service on a small scale in a defined part of the country, by creating a Transformation Area, which would be a safe environment to test, adapt and learn from new ideas and processes.

These measures will make a real difference to the millions of claimants who use our services.

We had previously announced that we would be undertaking a procurement exercise to establish contracts for conducting Work and Capability Assessments (WCA) and PIP health assessments from 1 August 2021. The impact of Covid-19 means it is not possible to launch that procurement at this time.

We recognise that it is vital for our claimants to have a safe and stable service. Consequently, my Department

intends to explore options to extend the current contracts for up to two years, which will ensure continuity of services when the current contracts end on 31 July 2021. We will continue to review these extensions to ensure we only extend for the time we need to effectively respond to the consequences of Covid-19.

The extension period will provide time to fully understand and evaluate the impacts of Covid-19 on these critical services, ahead of future procurements.

We recognise that there are positive lessons to be learned from our experience of delivering our services during Covid-19, and the changes we introduced. We are reviewing these and they will inform future delivery, where appropriate. We expect these to be reflected in our wider transformation plans, including the forthcoming Green Paper and subsequent policy decisions regarding the delivery of health assessments.

A key objective of the Health Transformation Programme is to improve the trust and transparency in the assessment process. We remain focused on improving the claimant experience and we will continue to work with stakeholders to ensure their insights and experiences are incorporated into the development of the new single, integrated health assessment service and to ensure we are delivering the high quality service claimants rightly expect and deserve.

## Industrial Development Act 1982: Coronavirus-related Assistance

[HLWS344]

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

I am tabling this statement for the benefit of Honourable and Right Honourable Members to bring to their attention spend under the Industrial Development Act 1982. In addition to the obligation to report on spend under the Industrial Development Act annually, the Coronavirus Act 2020 created a new quarterly reporting requirement for spend which has been designated as addressing the effects of coronavirus. This statement is intended to fulfil that purpose.

This report reflects quarter 1 of 2020, covering the period from the introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020 on 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2020.

### *Spend under the Coronavirus Act 2020*

Under the Coronavirus Act 2020, there is a requirement to lay before Parliament details of the amount of Coronavirus related designated assistance provided in each relevant quarter.

In the period to 31 March 2020 (from the Act's introduction on 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2020) 983 loans worth £90.5 million were committed for COVID related purposes by lenders accredited to deliver the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme. Under

this scheme, BEIS through the British Business Bank provides an 80% guarantee. The contingent liability	incurred was therefore £72.4 million. The actual expenditure to 31 March 2020 was zero.
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Actual expenditure of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2020	£0
All expenditure of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2020	£0
Contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2020	£72.4m
All contingent liability of assistance provided by the Secretary of State from 25 March 2020 to 31 March 2020	£72.4m

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# Written Answers

Thursday, 9 July 2020

## Abortion

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many sets of pills for early medical abortions at home have been distributed; and what assessment they have made of the number of early medical abortions that have been carried out at home. [[HL6332](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Abortion data is published annually and data for 2020 is not due to be published until 2021. The data requires full quality assurance prior to release. The Code of Practice outlined in the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 prohibits the pre-release of official statistics before the due date of publication.

## Abortion: Drugs

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what investigation they have made, if any, of reports of misadministration of the abortion drugs mifepristone and misoprostol from a telemedicine appointment during the COVID-19 pandemic leading to the death of an unborn child at 28 weeks; and how many other cases of such misadministration they are aware of. [[HL6331](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** Public safety and continued access to key services is our priority during this difficult period. We are monitoring the impact of the temporary approval to approve women's homes as a class of place where both sets of medication for early medical abortion can be taken. We are aware that a small number of incidents have been identified which the Department is looking into working alongside the Care Quality Commission and others.

## Abortion: Mental Health

Asked by **Baroness Stroud**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made, if any, of the impact on the mental health of women performing an early medical abortion on their own at home during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. [[HL6333](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department is carefully monitoring the impact of and compliance with the temporary approval of home administration of both sets of abortion medication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials have regular meetings with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Care Quality Commission and abortion service providers to discuss the impact and any issues arising.

The Department's Required Standard Operating Procedures for independent sector providers set out that

'Women are not required to have compulsory counselling or compulsory time for reflection before the abortion. Clinicians caring for women requesting abortion should be able to identify those who require more support than can be provided in the routine abortion service setting, for example young women, those with a pre-existing mental health condition, those who are subject to sexual violence or poor social support, or where there is evidence of coercion. For the minority of women who require formal, therapeutic counselling, services should have referral pathways in place with access to trained counsellors with appropriate expertise.'

## Administration of Justice

Asked by **Lord German**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Keen of Elie on 29 June (HL Deb, col 464), when they expect to publish their White Paper on community justice and sentencing. [[HL6303](#)]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** We intend to publish a Sentencing White Paper this year ahead of legislating next year.

## Armed Forces: Ethnic Groups

Asked by **Lord Rogan**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to support the work of the British Army's BAME network. [[HL6380](#)]

**Baroness Goldie:** The Army's Black Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) Network was launched in November 2017 and is supported in several ways. These include an appointed Race Champion - Lieutenant General Tyrone Urch - who represents their views and experiences at Army Board level; Race Champion membership of Business in the Community which involves networking and a BAME mentoring initiative; membership of the Army Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Working Group, and Conferences, mentoring schemes, events, including virtual events, and publicity about the BAME Network in both internal Army communications and external media. Army D&I policy and briefings also highlight the BAME Network and both personnel and the Chain of Command are made aware as to how concerns and issues raised by the network are fed into policy.

## Asthma: Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group

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 asthma-related deaths at NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group. [[HL5868](#)]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department is committed to working in partnership with its arm's length bodies,



agencies and wider Government to improve the lives of those with lung disease.

Respiratory disease is a clinical priority within the NHS Long Term Plan. This has the overarching objective of improving outcomes for people with respiratory disease through earlier diagnosis and increased access to treatments.

### Asylum: Appeals

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the causes for the reported increase in asylum decisions being overturned in the higher courts, from 17 per cent in 2005 to 52 per cent in 2019. [HL6178]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The latest Home Office published statistics are available at: [www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-statistics-data-tables-year-ending-march-2020#asylum-and-resettlement](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/immigration-statistics-data-tables-year-ending-march-2020#asylum-and-resettlement).

It is not possible to undertake a specific assessment of allowed asylum appeal rates comparing 2005 to present day in order to respond to this question. This is because significant changes to appeal rights, caselaw, world situation and the types of cases received do not provide a suitable base for comparison over such an extended period of time. However, regular analysis of asylum appeal data and Judicial determinations is undertaken by both decision makers and appeals staff, with regular meetings and discussions to identify themes or areas for action to inform learning and improve decision making.

### Asylum: Interviews

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government for which languages there are interpreters available for asylum seekers' interviews. [HL6175]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** A definitive list of languages is not available as both demand for different languages and provision of interpreter services to meet the demand constantly change. Such services for asylum interviews are principally organised through the Home Office Interpreter Operation Unit. The Home Office also maintains ongoing arrangements with external providers in case demand cannot be fully met internally.

### Asylum: Travel

*Asked by Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what travel expenses, if any, are paid to asylum seekers required to report to Home Office centres. [HL6176]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** A person who has claimed asylum can make an application for travelling expenses to attend a reporting event. To qualify they must

live outside a 3-mile radius of their reporting location and be receiving asylum support. Consideration for support to those living within a 3-mile radius is considered on an exceptional need basis.

### Care Homes

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to modify the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards in order for relatives of residents in care homes to be able to move to their family homes residents of such homes who are currently not allowed to legally leave care homes.[T] [HL6194]

**Lord Bethell:** Emergency guidance issued at the beginning of the pandemic and the Codes of Practice for the Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards offer guidance to individuals trying to determine and make decisions in the best interests of a person who lacks capacity to make a particular decision, including on where to live.

Those making best interests decisions should seek consent on all aspects of care and treatment to which the person can consent. They should consider the person's wishes and feelings, as well as their beliefs and values that would be likely to influence their decision. They should also consider the views of the person's family members and those interested in the person's welfare. This approach applies to decisions about residence too.

### Care Homes: Abortion

*Asked by Baroness Stroud*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to remarks by Lord Bethell on 15 June (HL Deb, col 2028), when these reviews took place; what opportunities there were for external input into these reviews; and what conclusions they reached regarding the need to maintain the approval of women's homes as a class of place where pills can be taken for early medical abortion. [HL6330]

**Lord Bethell:** The Department is carefully monitoring the impact of and compliance with the temporary approval of home administration of both sets of abortion medication during the COVID-19 pandemic. Officials have regular meetings with the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Care Quality Commission and abortion service providers to discuss the impact and any issues arising. The Department is keeping under review when the temporary approval will be removed.

### Care Homes: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the remarks by Professor Neil Ferguson, Imperial College, London, that (1) he was

“shocked about how badly European – or countries around the world – have protected care home populations” from COVID-19, (2) “infections in care homes and hospitals spill back into the community”, and (3) “the level of transmission and number of cases will remain relatively flat between now and September, short of very big policy changes or behaviour changes in the community”. [HL5153]

**Lord Bethell:** Our number one priority for adult social care is for everyone who relies on care to get the care they need throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The steps we have taken have been designed with care users in mind, to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity and respect and that their particular needs are addressed.

Since the start of this pandemic we have been working closely with the sector and public health experts to put in place guidance and support for adult social care to respond to the pandemic. This includes updated guidance for care homes published on 19 June. This guidance provides advice to care homes on infection control procedures to limit the spread of the virus in care homes, protective measures for staff and minimising workforce transmission. A copy of Admission and Care of Residents in a Care Home during COVID-19 is attached.

Our help to care homes, which includes financial support, infection control training and supplies of personal protective equipment, has meant that nearly 60% of England’s care homes have had no outbreak at all.

As the Chief Medical Office has made clear, the rate of transmission and the number of cases of COVID-19 that we will see in the coming weeks and months will depend of how well we all follow social distancing guidance. The work of NHS Test and Trace and public health teams across the country will allow us to keep on top of any local outbreaks and keep the number of cases of COVID-19 low.

We are continuing to seek further evidence as domestic and international experience accrues and is published, and we are working tirelessly with the care sector and public health experts to explore all measures possible to reduce transmission and save lives.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

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

The material can be viewed online at:  
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-03/HL5153>

*Asked by **Baroness Murphy***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of the 14-day quarantine period required to be undertaken upon arrival by all new care home residents on the mental health of residents, in particular those with dementia. [HL6173]

**Lord Bethell:** Keeping people safe throughout this period is the Government’s top priority. We have been working closely with the sector and public health experts

to put in place guidance and support for adult social care and we will continue to ensure they have what they need to respond.

Due to evidence of asymptomatic spread, during periods of sustained transmission we recommend that all residents being discharged from hospital or interim care facilities to the care home and new residents admitted from the community should be isolated for 14 days within their own room.

The steps we have taken have been designed with care users in mind, to ensure that individuals are treated with dignity and respect and that their particular needs are addressed.

We know that the measures put in place to protect care home residents can be challenging for residents, staff and their families. We always seek to balance the impact that these measures may have, considering the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals alongside risks around transmission and the need to safeguard those living and working in care homes.

## Carers: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Pendra***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they have put in place for carers who are (1) having to rely on food banks, and (2) not paid for the care they are providing to vulnerable family members, during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6078]

*Asked by **Lord Pendra***

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the existing support provided to young carers, what plans they have to ensure such carers are paid for their work. [HL6079]

**Lord Bethell:** The Government recognises and appreciates the vital contribution made by unpaid carers, including young carers, who are providing invaluable support for relatives, friends and neighbours who are ill, elderly or disabled during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For those who find themselves in severe financial difficulties, the Government announced up to £16 million to provide food for charities and other organisations supporting those who are struggling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of this funding will provide millions of meals and be delivered through charities including FareShare and WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme).

## Casinos: Coronavirus

*Asked by **Lord Foster of Bath***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow casinos to reopen. [HL6353]

**Baroness Barran:** DCMS officials are in regular contact with Public Health England and the casino sector to discuss the protections that are needed to allow casinos



to reopen safely. This includes arranging a visit for senior public health representatives to assess the measures which are in place. The Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage has spoken with representatives of the sector about the impacts of closure, and the government is working to ensure casinos can open as soon as the medical and scientific advice is that it is safe to do so.

### Children: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Goudie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make children and their rights a priority of the UK's recovery plan from the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6158]

**Baroness Berridge:** Every child and young person in the country has experienced unprecedented disruption to their education as a result of COVID-19, and those from the most vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds will be amongst those hardest hit.

Education recovery lies at the heart of our national mission. This is why the government has announced a package of support worth £1 billion to ensure that schools have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time, with extra support in the form of a tutoring programme for those who need it most.

We have also supported charities that provide vital services that are helping vulnerable children and young people, including:

- £1.6 million for the NSPCC to expand its helpline so that adults can report their concerns about any child's wellbeing;
- More than £7 million to Barnardo's for the See, Hear, Respond service that offers targeted help to vulnerable children, young people and their families affected by COVID-19;
- £7.6 million for the Vulnerable Children National Charities Strategic Relief Fund, which opened in June and is for national children's charities that offer services to safeguard vulnerable children that have financially suffered due to the impact of COVID-19; and
- More than £12 million for 14 innovation projects in social services, each taking a holistic, family-based approach to addressing the increased risk some children and young people are facing.

As we continue on the road to recovery, returning to normal educational routines as quickly as possible will be critical for our children's and young people's education and for their wellbeing. That is why the government has announced its plans for schools, colleges, specialist settings and local authority adult education services to fully reopen to all children, young people, apprentices and adult learners from the beginning of the autumn term for full time education.

### City Deals: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the continued viability of City Deals in Northern Ireland as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6296]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The Prime Minister has set out his ambitious plan to invest in our future prosperity. Jobs, skills and infrastructure will be central to the UK Government's New Deal which will unleash the economic potential within every corner of the UK. As part of this, the UK Government intends to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland and will work with the devolved administrations on our ambitious plan for economic recovery across the UK.

This ambition is also reflected in our commitment of £562m to City and Growth Deals across Northern Ireland (NI) which will drive economic growth and productivity in line with the key local priorities. The NI Executive has recently agreed to match the UK Government commitment to City and Growth Deals and the Inclusive Future Fund, bringing total investment to £1.2bn and highlighting what our partnership can achieve.

This partnership and long-term strategic investment will be vital in supporting Northern Ireland's economic recovery following the impact and challenges presented by Covid-19. The Councils and their delivery partners are therefore working at speed to ensure their projects reflect the best opportunities for investment. Whilst Covid-19 has required some reassessment of local priorities, we are confident that progress is being made across each of the deals. Northern Ireland Office Ministers continue to engage regularly with the Chief Executives of the City and Growth Deals in Northern Ireland and the Northern Ireland Office is working closely with Councils and NI Executive colleagues to provide any support necessary to accelerate their implementation.

### Contraceptives

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what regions have (1) the highest, and (2) the lowest, use of self-injectable contraceptives in the UK. [HL6031]

**Lord Bethell:** The information requested is not collected centrally.

### Coronavirus: Disease Control

*Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by Professor Tim Spector on 18 May that up to 70,000 people in the UK with COVID-19 are not being told to self-isolate. [HL4661]

**Lord Bethell:** Following scientific and medical advice, the list of symptoms was updated on 18 May to include loss or change to sense of smell or taste. We continue to be guided by the scientific and medical evidence.

*Asked by Baroness Thornton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what formal statistical confidence limit is represented by the very likely upper and lower bounds on the estimated COVID-19 reproduction rate, R, as published on the government website. [HL5431]

**Lord Bethell:** R is an average value that can vary in different parts of the country and communities. It cannot be measured directly, and calculating R becomes more uncertain when using small numbers of cases, either due to lower infection rates or smaller geographical areas.

Even when the overall United Kingdom R estimate is below 1, some regions may have R estimates that include ranges that exceed 1, for example from 0.7 to 1.1. This does not necessarily mean the epidemic regionally is increasing, just that the uncertainty in the data means it cannot be ruled out.

Estimates of R for geographies smaller than regional level are less reliable and it is more appropriate to identify local hotspots through, for example, monitoring numbers of cases, hospitalisations, and deaths.

### Coronavirus: Horse Riding

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why covered arenas in riding schools have been included in the same category as indoor gyms and sports halls when prohibiting their reopening following their closure as part of the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6163]

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they will lift the restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic on the use of covered arenas in riding schools. [HL6164]

*Asked by Baroness Hodgson of Abinger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the ongoing restrictions in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic on the use of covered arenas in riding schools; and (2) the risk that riding schools will be at risk of closure if those restrictions remain in place over the summer months. [HL6165]

**Baroness Barran:** The Government has published guidance on GOV.UK on the phased return of sport and recreation, in line with the latest medical advice. The guidance for the public on outdoor sport and recreation has recently been updated to clarify that equestrian covered arenas can be used, provided social distancing guidelines can be followed. These facilities are not

considered 'indoor' for the purposes of this guidance as they are large, open and well-ventilated structures. The guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-phased-return-of-sport-and-recreation>.

### Coronavirus: Hospitals

*Asked by Lord Warner*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any of the Nightingale hospitals in England are being used for (1) inpatient, or (2) outpatient, treatment of patients with (a) cancer, or (b) cardiac conditions, whose treatment had been delayed due to COVID-19. [HL5142]

**Lord Bethell:** The development of the Nightingale hospitals was a response to an unprecedented challenge as they provided extra capacity to manage surges in demand due to COVID-19.

To provide additional capacity for the National Health Service the Nightingale hospitals have been flexed to respond to changing demand and it was recently announced that Harrogate and Exeter Nightingale hospitals are to be used to increase diagnostic capacity in a COVID-19 free environment. Regions and host trusts will continue to consider future use and the Nightingales will be an important part of ensuring the NHS has the capacity required at this time and in the coming months.

### Defence: Industry

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the defence industry. [HL6374]

**Baroness Goldie:** It is inevitable that the Covid-19 pandemic will have some impact on the defence industry and we remain closely engaged with our strategic suppliers during this difficult time to understand this in more detail. We will continue to provide support, where appropriate, to ensure that critical defence operations and programmes, on which our nation relies, continue uninterrupted.

### Entry Clearances: Overseas Students

*Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogna*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the backlog of student visa applications for Northern Ireland universities from applicants from China and India. [HL6125]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Our Visa Application Centres in China began to open on 2nd June 2020 and to date have provided sufficient capacity to accommodate Tier 4 demand for students wishing to study at all locations within the United Kingdom.

Our Visa Application Centres in India reopened from 6th July. We are opening further locations globally to allow the further submission of student applications.

We are continuing to work with the Education Sector and our Commercial Partners to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the system, to allow for all applications to be made for the Autumn enrolment.

### Firearms: Amnesties

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when was the last firearms amnesty in the UK. [\[HL6134\]](#)

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The National Ballistic Intelligence Service (NABIS) has coordinated several national firearms surrender campaigns removing thousands of potentially lethal items from getting into criminal hands.

Surrender campaigns were held in 2014 and 2017 with the last campaign running between 20 July and 4 August 2019.

The 2019 campaign had two key purposes. Firstly, to remove firearms from criminal availability, and secondly, to allow the public to safely surrender, without prosecution, firearms held illegally or without knowledge of the legislation, providing the opportunity to dispose of a firearm or ammunition by handing it in to the police.

### Forced Labour: Uighurs

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they are taking to ensure that companies found to have lied on their public declarations, made under the provisions of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, about the use of Uyghur slave labour in the manufacture of products or within supply chains, are (1) identified, and (2) held to account. [\[HL6105\]](#)

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires certain businesses with a turnover of £36m or more, equating to approximately 16,000 businesses, to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

The prevalence of modern slavery and complexity of global supply chains means that it is highly unlikely that any company is immune from the risks of modern slavery. Section 54 therefore does not require organisations to certify that their supply chains are 'slavery free' or that the Government verifies the content of modern slavery statements. The Government encourages companies to report transparently about how they are mitigating modern slavery risks and to use their modern slavery statements to demonstrate year on year progress.

The transparency legislation was designed to enable consumers, investors and civil society to scrutinise business action. To improve reporting quality,

accountability and accessibility of statements, we are developing a government-run registry which will host modern slavery statements. We have also consulted on proposals to strengthen the Modern Slavery Act, increase transparency and improve compliance.

### GCE A-level and GCSE: Assessments

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have put in place to facilitate permanently home-schooled children being awarded the grades required to allow the take up of college and university places in the 2020/21 academic year. [\[HL6186\]](#)

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the appeals system for grades awarded this year for GCSE, AS Level and A Level exams will operate to a timetable that will ensure that students do not have to defer the next stage of their education by a full year. [\[HL6188\]](#)

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

### Hazardous Substances: Amnesties

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to hold an amnesty of acids and other dangerous substances in the UK. [\[HL6136\]](#)

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government currently has no plans to hold an amnesty of acids and other dangerous substances in the UK. We recently strengthened the law on corrosives through the Offensive Weapons Act 2019 with legislative measures specifically stopping the sale and delivery of corrosive substances to under 18s and making it an offence to possess a corrosive substance in a public place. The Act requires the publication of statutory guidance before a number of the measures can be commenced, including the corrosives measures, and this guidance will be published shortly.

### Immigration: Applications

*Asked by Baroness Hamwee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the acceptance of applications for settled status after the deadline of 30 June 2021, what are the proposed criteria for accepting those applications; what plans there are to consult with stakeholders on those criteria; and when those criteria will be published. [\[HL6159\]](#)

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government has made clear, where a person eligible for leave under the EU Settlement Scheme has reasonable grounds for

missing the application deadline of 30 June 2021, they will be given a further opportunity to apply. Our compassionate and flexible approach will ensure individuals who miss the deadline through no fault of their own can still obtain lawful status in the UK. We have not set out the criteria for what will constitute reasonable grounds for submitting an application after the deadline as we want to continue to encourage people to apply before 30 June 2021, whilst allowing the maximum possible flexibility when the situation arises. Examples will include children whose parent or guardian failed to apply on their behalf, people in abusive or controlling relationships who were prevented from applying, and those who lack the physical or mental capacity to apply. We will publish clear guidance for caseworkers in due course.

### Import Controls: National Security

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they intend to take through the implementation of Project Defend to reduce the UK's reliance on imports from authoritarian states and to increase national resilience. [HL6342]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** Project DEFEND is working to help Britain become more resilient and ensure that more diverse supply chains are put in place to allow the continued flow of essential items and avoid shortages in future.

We are analysing critical supply chains and identifying countries with a high level of supply chain influence, in order that we can help strengthen Britain's supply chain resilience. Our approach continues to underline our international leadership in promoting free trade, and our belief in the benefits that free trade brings.

### Knives: Amnesties

*Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when was the last knife amnesty in the UK. [HL6135]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The last national knife amnesty in the UK occurred under Operation Sceptre on 23-29 March this year. Operation Sceptre is a national week of action coordinated by the National Police Chiefs' Council. The Operation focuses on tackling knife crime and wider violence and in addition to the surrender of knives, including through amnesty bins, it involves targeted stop and searches and weapon sweeps. The next week of action is currently being planned for this September, and knife amnesties are also undertaken by forces on a local level throughout the year.

The Government is committed to tackling knife crime and making our streets safer - we encourage all police forces to participate in Operation Sceptre and run local knife amnesties.

### Life Expectancy

*Asked by Lord Rooker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what the average life expectancy in England (1) is currently, and (2) was in 2010. [HL6324]

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

Dear Lord Rooker,

As National Statistician and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority, I am responding to your Parliamentary Question asking what the average life expectancy in England (1) is currently, and (2) was in 2010 (HL6324).

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) published the 'National life tables; England' dataset[1] on 25 September 2019. The latest available figures show that period life expectancy at birth for the years 2016 to 2018 was 83.18 years for females and 79.56 years for males. The corresponding figures for the years 2008 to 2010 are 82.33 for females and 78.31 for males.

Period life expectancy assumes mortality rates remain constant into the future. For further information, please see 'Period and Cohort Life Expectancy Explained'[2].

The bulletin published with the national life tables contains further information about these tables[3].

Yours sincerely,

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/datasets/nationallifetablesenglandreferencetables>

[2]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/methodologies/periodandcohortlifeexpectancyexplained>

[3]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/lifeexpectancies/bulletins/nationallifetablesunitedkingdom/2016to2018>

### Local Government Finance: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they intend to provide to local councils to deal with any future COVID-19 outbreaks. [HL6145]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** We have already provided local authorities with an unprecedented package of support.

Local authorities have been allocated £4.3bn of support which can be used for expenditure pressures, including £3.7bn of unringfenced grants and the £600m Infection Control Fund.



We have also introduced a co-payment scheme for relevant, irrecoverable income losses in 2020-21, where councils will bear the first 5% of income losses but the Government will cover 75p in every pound beyond this.

On tax we have announced that the repayment of collection fund deficits arising this year will be spread over the next three years rather than the usual one. This support will give councils considerable breathing room when setting budgets for next year before we make a fuller announcement at the Spending Review.

### **Local Government: Coronavirus**

*Asked by **Baroness Eaton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Local Government Association reports Resident satisfaction with councils' response to COVID-19, published in May, and Polling on resident satisfaction with councils: Round 26, published in June, and in particular, the findings on levels of trust in councils. [\[HL6151\]](#)

**Lord Greenhalgh:** We read the LGA reports with interest. They show an increase in both resident satisfaction and trust in local councils since February. This reflects the vital role local authorities are playing to keep their communities safe during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Nature Conservation: Finance**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the proposals by community groups for the creation of a national nature service, what plans they have to fund the creation of such a service. [\[HL6115\]](#)

**Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park:** Environmental organisations make a valuable contribution to the Government's environmental agenda. They do this through conservation of the natural environment; engaging people in the natural world; and providing access to our beautiful landscapes and coastlines.

As we rebuild our economy in response to the coronavirus pandemic, we must continue to shape an economy and society that are cleaner, greener and more resilient. This Government remains committed to being a world leader on tackling the environmental crises we face. Our recently launched £40 million Green Recovery Challenge Fund will support up to 2000 jobs and lead to the creation of up to 3000 more in environmental space.

We welcome the range of proposals that have been shared by groups including environmental organisations to deliver a green recovery. We are reviewing these based upon the best use of public funds.

### **NHS: Disease Control**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the personal protective equipment they have procured during the COVID-19 pandemic has been manufactured by UK businesses. [\[HL5474\]](#)

**Lord Bethell:** COVID-19 has created a significant personal protective equipment (PPE) supply issue and global markets have faced a significant surge in demand which has resulted in vast increases in the cost of PPE, demonstrating the market's response to increased competition. In response, we are working to improve domestic manufacturing capability.

Lord Deighton is leading the Government effort by British industry to manufacture PPE. The Government is currently in contact with over 350 potential United Kingdom manufacturers and efforts by small companies are being scaled up. We have already taken delivery of products from new, certified UK manufacturers. More new manufacturers of PPE are expected to commit to producing PPE in the coming weeks, with 25 opportunist companies in final commercial discussions.

We are building up UK manufacturing with signed contracts to manufacture over two billion items of PPE through UK-based manufacturers, including facemasks, visors, gowns and aprons. This includes Survitec, a survival technology company, will begin producing gowns as soon as the beginning of June; Bolle, who manufacture protective eyewear, will make 6.5 million visors over the course of the pandemic; Jaguar Land Rover is now manufacturing 14,000 visors a week for healthcare staff; Don & Low will be manufacturing 12 million metres squared of fabric for gowns over the next six months, with the first delivery expected later this month; and Burberry is manufacturing non-surgical gowns at its factory in Castleford and sourcing masks through its supply chain. To date, the company has donated over 100,000 pieces of PPE to the National Health Service and healthcare charities.

### **NHS: Mental Health**

*Asked by **Baroness Kennedy of Cradley***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the adequacy of mental health and other occupational health support for staff employed by the NHS in England. [\[HL5916\]](#)

**Lord Bethell:** The health and wellbeing of National Health Service staff is, and has always been, very important to the Government. At the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak we assessed that they would potentially need additional mental health and occupational health support.

We commissioned NHS England and NHS Improvement to develop a comprehensive package of emotional, psychological and practical support for NHS staff - building on the support already in place in local NHS organisations. The support package was launched by NHS England and NHS Improvement on 8 April.

NHS England and NHS Improvement have also launched a new framework, which will enable employers to buy-in additional occupational health support for their staff. This will supplement support already available in NHS organisations.

### **Northern Ireland Office: Departmental Responsibilities**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many meetings have taken place between Ministers in the Department for Work and Pensions and the Minister for Communities in Northern Ireland between 11 January and 26 June; and (2) what subjects were discussed. [HL6249]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** There were no meetings with the Minister for Communities in Northern Ireland during that period. There are regular meetings between officials in my Department and those in the Department for Communities to discuss matters of joint interest across the Work and Pensions portfolio.

### **Nuclear Power: Finance**

*Asked by **Lord Vinson***

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to finance new nuclear generation through (1) the use of long-term borrowing, and (2) partnering with the private sector, in order to achieve their net-zero target for greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. [HL6184]

**Lord Callanan:** We are looking at options for the financing of new nuclear projects. In 2019, we consulted on a Regulated Asset Base as a possible funding model for future nuclear projects. We will respond to the consultation in due course.

### **Overseas Students: EU Nationals**

*Asked by **Lord Bassam of Brighton***

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether postgraduate research students who (1) are EU citizens, and (2) were due to start courses at UK universities in the autumn and have deferred by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, will be exempt from Tier 4 student visa rules. [T] [HL6344]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** Free movement will cease at the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020.

EEA nationals intending to study within the UK from January 2021 will need to apply for and meet the requirements of the Student route under the UK's Points Based Immigration system.

### **Personation**

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

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the prevalence of identity theft; and what plans they have to introduce a specific offence in this respect, separate from fraud or conspiracy. [HL6118]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is aware of the harms caused by identity theft and that criminals will use this to commit and enable a range of offences.

Existing legislation is in place to protect people's personal data and prosecute those that commit crimes enabled by identity theft. These include the Fraud Act 2006, the Identity Documents Act 2010 and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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

### **Planning Permission**

*Asked by **Lord Storey***

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) how many local authority planning applications have been called in by the Planning Inspectorate; (2) how many of these were overturned by the Planning Inspectorate; and (3) how many Planning Inspectorate decisions were overturned by Ministers in (a) 2016/17, (b) 2017/18, and (c) 2018/19. [HL6180]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Planning Inspectorate does not call in planning applications, this is done by Ministers. Ministers decide called in applications rather than the Planning Inspectorate, based on the recommendation of an independent Inspector.

The Planning Inspectorate publishes statistics on the number of cases called in by Ministers. Numbers of cases called in were as follows:

2016-17 – 17.

2017-18 – 13.

2018-19 – 8.

The number of called in cases decided by Ministers where they disagreed with the planning Inspector's recommendation were

2016-17 - 3 (out of a total of 14 cases decided).

2017-18 - 2 (out of a total of 10 cases decided).

2018-19 - 1 (out of a total of 5 cases decided).



## Road Traffic Control: Police

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what was the total number of specialist roads policing officers employed in each of the last ten years. [HL5642]

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the amount of time specialist roads policing officers spend investigating accidents, compared to time spent on enforcement aimed at accident prevention. [HL5644]

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many arrests have been made by road policing units in each of the last five years; and what proportion of arrests for serious crime were made by road policing units in each of the last five years. [HL5645]

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many items of equipment related to the prevention or reductions of road accidents are currently awaiting type approval; and how long each such item has been awaiting approval. [HL5647]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office collects and publishes data annually on the primary function of police officers, as part of the 'Police workforce, England and Wales' statistical bulletins, which can be accessed here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>.

These data include 4415 Full Time Equivalent officers whose primary function is "Road Policing", and officers with multiple responsibilities are recorded under their primary function.

This government is fully committed to giving the police the powers and resources they need to fight crime. The Chief Officer will decide how to deploy available resources in dealing with all the issues for which the force is responsible, including roads policing, taking into account any specific local problems and demands with which they are faced.

The Home Office collect and publish arrests data (available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales-year-ending-31-march-2019>), however, information on the officer making the arrest is not collected.

Manufacturers have 15 devices that are currently seeking product type approval from the Home Office, with varying timelines to approval ranging from a few months to 3 years.

Differing timeframes for the approval process are influenced by a number of complicating factors, for example improvements identified by the type approval

process that are required for meeting approval requirements, the submission of valid test reports or the provision of manufacturer's data.

## Sevenoaks School

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with Sevenoaks School following reports that teaching staff are routinely asked to increase predicted grades on UCAS applications for students who may be in danger of missing out on their preferred degree course. [HL6189]

**Baroness Berridge:** The department is aware of a complaint that Sevenoaks School has increased predicted grades on Universities and College Admissions Service (UCAS) applications for some students. The school's handling of the complaint will be considered when it is next inspected.

UCAS provides guidance for all schools to support them in making predicted grades and the school has been reminded about these guidelines.

Schools should not be inflating predicted grades and we expect teachers to use their best judgement to predict grades for students which most accurately reflect their abilities.

If this is not the case in any school, we expect them to change their policies.

## Terrorism: Northern Ireland

*Asked by Lord Maginnis of Drumglass*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to (1) reports that the Northern Ireland Executive has failed to implement the Victims' Payment Scheme for victims of terrorism successfully, and (2) the UK's historical responsibility and involvement in the 1969–1994 counter terrorism campaign in Northern Ireland, what plans they have to take direct responsibility for the implementation and operation of that Scheme. [HL6370]

**Viscount Younger of Leckie:** The Government provided a legislative framework for this scheme in the absence of an Executive and the Executive must now deliver. The Government is taking this matter very seriously and we are extremely disappointed by the current delay.

The Executive needs to designate a department that can own the policy and implement the scheme so that applications can be processed and payments made to victims. The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland remains in regular contact with the First and deputy First Ministers on progress towards this priority.

We do not recognise the relevance of the reference to "the UK's historical responsibility and involvement in the 1969–1994 counter terrorism campaign in Northern Ireland" in relation to delivery of the Victims Payment

scheme. The Executive committed to “find a way forward” on this issue in 2014. We have provided that way forward. This is clearly a devolved matter and it is imperative that the Executive sets aside its political differences and delivers for victims.

### Trade Agreements: USA

*Asked by Lord Browne of Belmont*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the progress of trade negotiations with the government of the United States. [HL6297]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The second round of negotiations for a UK-US Free Trade Agreement (FTA) took place from 15-26 June 2020. A Written Ministerial Statement was published on Tuesday 30 June, updating parliament on the outcomes of the round.

Talks continued to be positive and constructive, with progress being made towards a comprehensive agreement. Discussions spanned the majority of areas covered by an FTA, with further sessions coming over the next two weeks on remaining major policy areas.

During the round, talks advanced across a number of chapters and teams are now into detailed discussions on text.

There was good progress on a dedicated Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) chapter. This included agreement that the next formal UK-US SME Dialogue will be held in Boston in October 2020.

The third negotiating round is expected to take place at the end of July.

### Trade Policy: Devolution

*Asked by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Ministerial Forum set up to include the devolved administrations in trade policy and trade agreements last met; how often it has met since it was established; and what is the composition and remit of the Forum. [HL6313]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** The Ministerial Forum for Trade last met on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020. It has been convened twice since it was established in January of this year and will meet again in the coming weeks. The Forum is chaired by my Hon Friend, the Minister of State for Trade Policy, and membership comprises Ministerial representatives from each Devolved Administration and UK Government Territorial Offices. The forum covers matters of trade policy, including the UK's current and future negotiations, priorities at the WTO and trade disputes.

### Vaccination

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recovery plans they have put in place to help routine immunisation programmes to return to normal coverage (1) during, and (2) after, the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL5565]

**Lord Bethell:** Public Health England, NHS England and NHS Improvement are working with regional commissioners to ensure routine childhood immunisations continue to be delivered in primary care settings during the pandemic. Programmes delivered through schools are currently on hold and will be rescheduled as schools open.

People in the age group eligible for the shingles vaccine are required to take particular care to avoid a situation where they are at higher risk of acquiring COVID-19 so they are not being actively called for immunisation but if they are attending the general practitioner practice for other reasons and it is clinically appropriate to offer shingles vaccine, they will be given the vaccine.

NHS England and NHS Improvement are drawing up an immunisation recovery plan, taking into account risk assessment advice from Public Health England.

### Vocational Education: Qualifications

*Asked by Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they (1) have, and (2) plan to, put in place to ensure that students studying vocational and other equivalent qualifications are able to complete their qualifications in the same way as those studying for GCSEs and A-Levels. [HL6187]

**Baroness Berridge:** It is imperative that as many students as possible receive their results this summer so they can progress to their next steps in education or employment. The department has been working closely with Ofqual, the qualifications regulator, to agree how this can be achieved, in light of the disruption to teaching and cancellation of examinations and assessments this year due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Ofqual has published its framework for the awarding of results for vocational and technical qualifications, which sets out what awarding organisations must do to provide results for students who were due to take assessments this summer. Ofqual and awarding organisations are working with schools, colleges and other providers to implement these measures. The framework is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/extraordinary-regulatory-framework-vtq-covid-19-conditions-and-requirements>.

Results for vocational qualifications that are used for progression into further or higher education, such as Technical Awards and Applied General qualifications, should wherever possible be calculated in line with the approach for GCSEs, AS and A levels. For other vocational qualifications, such as those that are used for entry into employment where demonstration of practical competence is necessary, it may not be appropriate to calculate a result. For these, adapted assessments will be delivered and Ofqual is working with the awarding organisations and centres to deliver these assessments wherever possible this summer. Only as a last resort should assessments be delayed into the 2020/21 academic year.

An appeals process will be in place for students who believe that the assessment process was not followed correctly. Students who feel their result does not reflect their ability will be able to sit an assessment at the next available opportunity. An autumn assessment series for GCSE and A levels will be delivered in 2020. Ofqual has published its plans for this in response to its consultation, and Ofqual is working with awarding organisations to agree arrangements for autumn assessment opportunities for vocational and technical qualifications where appropriate. The department will issue further guidance on the autumn series in due course.

Ofqual has also published proposals for GCSE, AS and A level exams, and VTQ assessments for the 2020/2021 academic year, which are available here:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/897137/Consultation\\_on\\_proposed\\_changes\\_to\\_the\\_assessment\\_of\\_GCSEs\\_\\_AS\\_and\\_A\\_levels\\_in\\_2021\\_020620.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897137/Consultation_on_proposed_changes_to_the_assessment_of_GCSEs__AS_and_A_levels_in_2021_020620.pdf)

and:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/897029/VTQ\\_position\\_paper\\_-\\_operation\\_and\\_regulation\\_for\\_2020-21.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/897029/VTQ_position_paper_-_operation_and_regulation_for_2020-21.pdf)

## Women's Centres

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government which Women's Centres for women who have offended, or who are at risk of offending, are currently functioning; where those centres are located; who provides funds to those centres; and what assessment they have made of the success of such centres in preventing (1) offending, and (2) re-offending. [HL6166]

**Lord Keen of Elie:** The Government recognises the important role played by women's centres regarding women in contact with or at risk of coming into contact with the criminal justice system. These holistic services work to support women to address the often complex needs that underlie their offending behaviour.

Women's centres are spread across England and Wales and receive funding from different sources. Following the publication of the Female Offender Strategy, the Government invested £5.1 million over two years in women's community sector organisations, including women's centres. Thirty different organisations across England and Wales received funding, which included the creation of six new women's centres. On 5 May, the Government announced further funding of £2.5 million for the sector.

However, the detailed information requested about the number of women's centres that are currently functioning and how they are funded is not held or collected centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

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