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**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
(HANSARD)**

# **HOUSE OF LORDS**

## **WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS**

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<b>Baroness Evans of Bowes Park</b>	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
<b>Earl Howe</b>	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
<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
<b>Lord Gardiner of Kimble</b>	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
<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
<b>Baroness Penn</b>	Whip
<b>Baroness Scott of Bybrook</b>	Whip
<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

*Monday, 13 July 2020*

## **Covid-19: Restarting Businesses and Activities**

[HLWS349]

**Baroness Barran:** My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden MP, has made the following Statement:

I would like to update the House on the next steps in delivering the UK Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy.

These important steps forward have been made possible by the continued efforts of businesses and the public to comply with COVID-19 Secure guidelines and clinical advice on testing to protect against resurgences. While there remains a long way to go in tackling this virus, we continue to head in the right direction.

The Business Secretary and I have worked with industry and public health experts to help the remaining sectors and activities to become COVID-secure, and reopen as soon as possible.

Following this work, I can confirm that as of 11 July organised outdoor grassroots team sports and participation events are now able to restart, starting with cricket. Team sports will only be able to resume once the relevant sports' bodies guidance has been reviewed by Public Health England and the Health and Safety Executive.

Outdoor performances with an audience are now able to take place, as of 11 July, subject to social distancing. We will also pilot a number of indoor performances to look at how we can confidently usher socially-distanced audiences indoors as soon as possible. Rehearsals and performances for broadcast are already permitted, and dance studios can already reopen for professional dancers and choreographers.

New regulations allow some additional businesses and venues to reopen. This includes outdoor swimming pools and water parks from 11 July; and salons, nail bars, spas, massage parlours, tattoo parlours, and body and skin piercing services from 13 July. Although these businesses and venues are permitted to open, treatments carried out in the highest risk zone, the area directly in front of the face, are advised against at this stage.

The changes outlined above will not apply in Leicester and businesses there will not reopen. This is in line with current easing of restrictions in the rest of the country.

From 25 July, we will allow the safe and COVID-Secure reopening of indoor swimming pools, gyms, fitness and dance studios, leisure centres, and other indoor sports venues and facilities (as long as the evidence continues to support our doing so). This will be enabled through a separate set of amendments to the regulations.

We must continue to proceed carefully to make sure that there is not a second peak. The changes set out above

will be conditional on our ability to control the virus and respond effectively to outbreaks. The government will measure the effect of changes but will reapply restrictions if that is what the situation requires, as we have had to do in Leicester, and we will work with local councils which have a high prevalence of COVID-19 to create guidance reflecting where further business openings could be delayed.

Everybody must play their part in observing and complying with COVID-19 Secure and social contact guidelines to keep the virus under control and maintain our recovery. Publicly available government guidance is being published and updated on GOV.UK and by sector bodies.

## **Points-based Immigration System**

[HLWS348]

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

In 2016, and again in 2019, the British people voted to take back control of our borders and introduce a new points-based system that will work for the whole of the UK. The Immigration and Social Security Co-ordination (EU Withdrawal) Bill delivers on these votes by ending the automatic right to live and work in the UK for EU migrants from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

In February I set out the vision for a fairer, firmer, skills-led immigration system. The system will play a key part in our long-term approach to the labour market and in our response to the coronavirus pandemic.

At a time where an increased number of people across the UK are looking for work, the new points-based system will encourage employers to invest in the domestic UK workforce, rather than simply relying on labour from abroad.

But we are also making necessary changes, so it is simpler for employers to attract the best and brightest from around the world to come to the UK to complement the skills we already have.

We know this new immigration system and approach to the labour market will mean changes in the way businesses operate and recruit. Today I am laying before the House a command paper (CP 258) providing further detail on the points-based system, covering the main economic migration routes for those wishing to work or study or set up a business in the UK, to help both employers and applicants prepare and adapt for the changes ahead. Copies will be available from the Vote Office.

It will be simpler for businesses to access the talent they need as we have removed the Resident Labour Market Test, lowered the skills and salary threshold, and removed the cap on skilled workers.

The skilled worker route gives employers flexibility by allowing applicants to trade points if they have relevant

qualifications or work in a shortage occupation. We have commissioned our independent migration experts to produce a shortage occupation list, so that the Government can work with sectors to fill roles quickly where shortages may occur.

We will be introducing a new-fast track Health and Care Visa. This will make it easier and quicker for talented global health professionals to work in our brilliant NHS and in eligible occupations in the social care sector. The visa fee will be reduced and health professionals applying can expect a decision on whether they can work in the UK within just three weeks, following biometric enrolment. We will exempt frontline workers in the health and social care sector and wider

health workers from the requirement to pay the Immigration Health Surcharge.

Our Global Talent route launched earlier in the year encourages highly skilled individuals to come to the UK and provides a fast track route for top scientists and researchers.

To ensure our world-leading education sector remains competitive in a changing global market, we are refining the student route and launching a Graduate route in Summer 2021. The student route will be streamlined for sponsoring institutions and applicants, and the graduate route will help retain the brightest and the best students to contribute to the UK post-study.

Our new system sends a message to the whole world that Britain is open for business, but on our terms.

# Written Answers

Monday, 13 July 2020

## Antisemitism

Asked by *Lord Jopling*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to issue guidance on how to criticise the government of Israel without being antisemitic. [HL6485]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** We became the first country to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism in 2016. The IHRA definition is an invaluable tool for public bodies and the wider public to understand how antisemitism manifests itself in the 21st century. The IHRA definition is already used in guidance for the Police and Crown Prosecution Service, providing examples of the kinds of behaviours which, depending on the circumstances, could constitute antisemitism.

## Armed Forces: Job Satisfaction

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent assessment they have made of the level of job satisfaction among armed forces personnel; and what trends, if any, they have identified. [HL6419]

**Baroness Goldie:** The 2020 Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) demonstrates that 58 per cent of personnel are satisfied with their job, an increase of three per cent since 2018.

Job satisfaction in the Armed Forces is a high priority for Defence. The Department seeks to measure job satisfaction in a robust, consistent and scientific manner, through forums such as the AFCAS. Although nearly 60 per cent are satisfied with their job, only 45 per cent are satisfied with Service life; we recognise that aspects of the latter can be a factor in decisions to leave. Whilst Armed Forces retention is generally stable and is towards the higher end of historic levels, we are taking active steps to bolster it.

The Ministry of Defence is actively working to modernise the employment offer for Service personnel to attract and retain the right mix of people and skills. This includes addressing the financial aspect of the offer, trialling at scale a new Future Accommodation Model (FAM) giving greater choice over housing options, and the introduction of Flexible Service allowing alteration of career commitment for set periods of time.

## Asylum: Finance

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the policy to withdraw section 95

support from asylum seekers when they are given temporary accommodation with food. [HL6258]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** There has been no change to policy.

Asylum seekers receiving support under section 95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 and in dispersed accommodation are generally provided with accommodation and a cash allowance to cover other essential living needs.

For those in full board section 98 Initial Accommodation, hotels or hostels, essential living expenses are covered and they do not therefore receive a cash allowance. Where section 98 accommodation is self-catered they will receive a cash amount to purchase their own food.

As a result of the Covid-19 crisis a higher proportion of asylum seekers than usual are being accommodated in full-board hostels and hotels.

## Asylum: Interviews

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to make transcripts of Home Office interviews with asylum seekers available for scrutiny. [HL6254]

Asked by *Lord Roberts of Llandudno*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to record Home Office interviews with those claiming refugee status. [HL6255]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Home Office follows published policy and guidance. This means substantive asylum interviews are digitally recorded, and an audio copy made of the interview is provided to the claimant or their legal representative. In addition to the digital recording they are provided with a full written verbatim interview transcript.

## Bank of England: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the Governor of the Bank of England's comments made on 22 June that the Government would have struggled to fund itself if the Bank had not intervened. [HL6239]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** The Government does not comment on the Bank of England's decisions. As stated by the Governor, the Bank uses quantitative easing (QE) to meet its own monetary policy objectives – including ensuring the smooth functioning of financial markets and controlling inflation – and buys gilts only from the secondary market. In line with the institutional separation of monetary and fiscal policy, decisions on QE are a matter for the independent Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

The borrowing undertaken so far this year has been necessary to support the UK economy at this time. The UK is facing significant economic disruption, but the underlying causes of this disruption will pass. That is why we needed to act to ensure these effects do not become permanent. The Government announced unprecedented support for public services, business and workers to protect against the current economic emergency. Not taking these steps would result in the temporary effects of COVID-19 leaving permanent scars in our economy. The OBR have said that the fiscal and monetary support measures “help to limit the adverse impact on potential output and thus future GDP once the crisis has passed”.

The Government’s cost of borrowing is at an all-time low, despite the recent large increase in borrowing to support jobs and the economy. The gilt market is deep and liquid, with a good track record in responding smoothly to increases in gilt supply. The UK Debt Management Office (DMO) has been set a target issuance level of £275bn over the period April-August (inclusive).

Gilt auctions since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis have performed well; they have all been well-covered and pricing has been efficient. The UK Government remains the benchmark borrower in its own market and currency and gilts remain the key pricing reference for all sterling fixed income markets. Gilts remain as risk-free assets for major investors both internationally and in the UK. Underlying demand for the UK’s debt remains strong, with a well-diversified investor base, and no uncovered auctions since 2009.

### **Business Premises: Inspections**

*Asked by Earl Attlee*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to require statutory inspections of (1) mobile cranes of over 10,000 kilograms lifting capacity, (2) fixed cranes of over 10,000 kilograms lifting capacity, (3) electrical installations in public buildings, and (4) passenger lifts, to be conducted by inspectors who they appoint and fund. [HL6396]

**Baroness Stedman-Scott:** Under the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998, dutyholders (employers and the self-employed) have a statutory duty to have lifting equipment for use at work (including cranes and lifts) thoroughly examined by a competent person at time intervals set out in the Regulations. Her Majesty’s Government has no plans to appoint inspectors or fund inspections to deliver these statutory inspections because the legal obligation to ensure safety rests with the person who controls the equipment or premises.

Under the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989, dutyholders are obliged to ensure all electrical systems are maintained to ensure the safety of the system. The obligation to maintain only arises if a lack of maintenance could cause danger. The frequency of maintenance is a matter for the judgement of the dutyholder. Her Majesty’s Government has no plans to change the legislation for the

way such maintenance is carried out or appoint inspectors or fund inspections for maintenance.

### **Chechnya: LGBT People**

*Asked by Lord McInnes of Kilwinning*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what discussions they have had with, and (2) what assurances they have sought from, the government of Russia about the treatment of LGBT people in the Chechen Republic since 2018. [HL6495]

**Baroness Sugg:** We remain deeply concerned about the continuing persecution of LGBT people in Chechnya. The UK Government has raised this issue repeatedly with the Russian Government and made clear that Russia must abide by its international human rights obligations. On 17 June, the Minister for the European Neighbourhood and the Americas raised our concerns with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Titov.

In December 2018, the UK was one of 16 countries to invoke the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism, requiring an independent OSCE investigation. The OSCE Moscow Mechanism's independent 2018 report confirmed allegations of serious human rights violations in Chechnya against LGBT people and other groups including unlawful detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings. We continue to urge Russia to implement the recommendations made in the Moscow Mechanism report and to end the climate of impunity for human rights abusers in Chechnya.

### **Children: Day Care**

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for providing childcare for the children of key workers during the school summer holiday. [HL6385]

**Baroness Berridge:** When state schools in a local area have closed for the summer term, children of all ages may attend holiday clubs and other out-of-school provision in that area, including the children of critical workers. This follows confirmation from my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, that from Saturday 4 July, these providers can operate over the summer holiday, with safety measures in place.

The department has published guidance for providers who run holiday clubs and other out-of-school provision for children over the age of 5, setting out the safety measures that must be in place to ensure they can operate over the summer holiday, which is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-measures-for-holiday-or-after-school-clubs-and-other-out-of-school-settings-for-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>.

Providers caring for children under the age of 5 should refer to the guidance for early years and childcare

providers during the COVID-19 outbreak, which is available here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures#who-this-guidance-is-for>.

### Coastal Communities Fund: North East

*Asked by The Lord Bishop of Newcastle*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the Coastal Communities Fund has been spent since 2012 on regions (1) in the North East of England, and (2) north of the River Tyne in England. [HL6244]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Since 2012, HMG has committed £182,891,469 to support sustainable economic growth in coastal communities in England through the Coastal Communities Fund. Of this money, 12.32% (£22,530,653) has been allocated to projects in the North East of England. 6.24% (£11,417,229) has been allocated to projects north of the River Tyne.

### Companies: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what criteria they intend to adopt in assessing the possible awards for financial rescue under Project Birch; whether their preference is for a loan or equity; and how they will ensure that any such award does not create a dominant position in the sector concerned. [HL6202]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** As part of its normal operations the government has always considered providing support to strategically important companies that can reasonably be expected to have a long-term viable future, and whose failure or distress could cause disproportionate harm to the UK economy or society. Companies must have exhausted all other options before being considered, and any support given will be on terms that protect the taxpayer, with existing lenders and shareholders expected to contribute meaningfully to and share in the financial burden.

All interventions will be, by definition, bespoke. As appropriate, the Government will include provisions to allow the taxpayer to share in the benefits of a company's recovery, including through equity, equity-like and hybrid instruments. Any intervention will be designed to minimise economic distortion and be on commercial, or close to commercial terms, as far as is practicable.

### Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme: Fraud

*Asked by Lord Wills*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assurances, if any, they will give to whistleblowers who raise concerns that they are being forced to work while money is being claimed on their behalf under the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme that their

employers, and not the whistleblowers, will be liable for fraud and the recovery of any money obtained illegally. [HL6337]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** In cases of fraudulent claims in respect of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, HMRC will seek to recover funds from the claimant employer.

Using powers that are before this House in the Finance Bill, where the employer is an insolvent company and an individual with management responsibility knowingly made an excessive claim, HMRC will be able to seek to recover funds from that individual.

Whistleblowers can be confident that HMRC will act to protect their confidentiality, and that they will not be liable for recovery. This does not include cases where the employer and employee conspire to defraud the scheme.

Employees can report their suspicions of fraud on HMRC's tax evasion form, available through GOV.UK.

### Cricket: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Bassam of Brighton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they intend to provide to (1) the England and Wales Cricket Board, and (2) other governing bodies for cricket. [HL6198]

**Baroness Barran:** Sport England, the national sports council for England, has provided £9m to the England and Wales Cricket Board for 2017- 2021 period, plus an additional £1.2m of funding for a specific volunteering project linked to the Cricket World Cup in 2019. As part of Sport England's flexible support to system partners during Covid-19, they have committed to rolling over funding for a further year (details about this can be found on Sport England's website:

<https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/coronavirus/funding-innovation-and-flexibility>).

Other national governing bodies of cricket are outside the remit of Sport England funding.

The Government recognises the impact that Covid-19 is having on the sporting sector. The Chancellor announced an unprecedented package of measures to help businesses during this period, including £330 billion worth of government-backed and guaranteed loans to support businesses across the UK. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme have supported businesses across the UK and in every sector, including sport.

In addition, Sport England, announced £210 million of funding to help sport and physical activity organisations deal with the short and long term effects of the pandemic.

The Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage has been engaging with the England and Wales Cricket Board to ensure they are aware of the assistance available to the sport and how it can be accessed. We know this is a challenging period for all sports and we continue to work closely with the whole sector to understand the issues

they face and how we can best support them through this difficult time.

### Cultural Renewal Taskforce

*Asked by Lord Storey*

To ask Her Majesty's Government why there are no representatives of the music industry on the Cultural Renewal Taskforce. [HL6421]

**Baroness Barran:** The Cultural Renewal Taskforce has been established to support the renewal of DCMS sectors and to help the development of new COVID-19 secure guidelines for the reopening of places and businesses in these sectors, where and when it is safe to do so. The Taskforce is made up of individuals and organisations from across DCMS sectors, representing a broad range of views and backgrounds. The organisations vary not only by size and scale, but are also representative of organisations with sector interests across the country.

To support the Cultural Renewal Taskforce and the development of guidelines, DCMS has also set up eight sectoral Working Groups, which are ministerially led. Each Working Group has broad membership covering a range of relevant organisations and representative bodies for sectors.

The Entertainment and Events Working Group has numerous members from the music industry, including Association of British Orchestras, Association of Independent Festivals, Music Venue Trust and The Musicians Union. In addition, the membership of the Broadcasting, Film and Production working group also includes representation for the music industry from the Association of Independent Music, British Phonographic Industry, Music Producers Guild, and The Musicians Union.

As well as establishing these Working Groups, we continue to work with the music industry to understand the difficulties they face and help them access support through these challenging times and through recovery.

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

*Asked by Lord Harris of Haringey*

To ask the Leader of the House why the question for Topical Written Answer HL4504, tabled on 14 May and due for answer on 21 May, has not yet been answered; what are the reasons for the delay in responding to that question; what steps have been taken to investigate those reasons; and what measures have been put in place to ensure that the written questions that are currently overdue for reply will receive timely answers that address the substance of the questions tabled. [T] [HL6469]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** The Department of Health and Social Care has received 6240 written Parliamentary Questions between 1 January and 8 July, of which 4496 have been answered up to 8 July. My office

regularly speaks with departments about late responses and I have raised lateness of written questions with my counterparts in the Department of Health and Social Care. This has resulted in Ministers asking teams to redouble their efforts in making sure that written parliamentary questions are answered as quickly as possible.

### East Midlands Rail Franchise

*Asked by Lord Bradshaw*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Vere of Norbiton on 16 March (HL2045), on what evidence the claim is made that splitting the Norwich-Liverpool rail services at Nottingham will improve reliability. [HL6209]

**Baroness Vere of Norbiton:** Recent cross industry work on performance in the North West looked at the impact on Manchester's Castlefield Corridor of trains heading to Manchester from Sheffield and found that "while the Norwich and Cleethorpes services generally depart their origin on time, by the time they depart Sheffield around 30% of trains are more than 5 minutes late".

This confirms that the Norwich to Liverpool services lose time crossing the different congested corridors and key stations along its route. As a result, the trains then transmit further delay to the rest of the network. Industry data from the second half of 2019 on which individual trains cause the most delays to other trains, show that three of the worst eight trains on the whole GB network for transmitting delay are in this service group.

Therefore, both Network Rail and East Midlands Railway are firmly of the view that splitting these services at Nottingham will not only improve the performance of the respective halves of the split service, but also the performance of many other trains across the country.

### Education and Unemployment: Young People

*Asked by Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by the Resolution Foundation Class of 2020: Education leavers in the current crisis, published in May, in particular its (1) finding that youth unemployment in Britain could reach one million over the coming year, and (2) recommendation that policies should be pursued to assist young people to continue to study, including the provision of maintenance support. [HL5741]

**Baroness Berridge:** We welcome the focus that the Resolution Foundation report draws to the challenge of supporting young people to progress into work and training.

The Government is actively considering ways to help young people continue to develop the skills they will need

for the future. We want to give young people the best chance to succeed, despite these challenging and unsettling times.

As part of raising the participation age legislation Local Authorities have duties to track all academic age 16 and 17 year olds, identify those not in education, employment or training (NEET) or at risk of becoming so and supporting them to re-engage in education or training. This includes a September guarantee where Local Authorities need to ensure that all year 11 students and year 12 students on a one year course have a suitable offer of education or training for the following September.

The department provides a range of financial support for students aged 16 to 19, to enable them to participate and stay in further education, including free meals, bursaries to help with the cost of travel, books, equipment, IT and connectivity, plus support for childcare and residential costs. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-financial-support-for-students>.

For those learners aged 19 and over, the DfE supports a broad spectrum of learning provision from non-formal, unaccredited learning which helps to engage disadvantaged learners through to Apprenticeships and Traineeships where learners can gain the skills and qualifications needed to get into work.

Learners aged 19 or over who are studying on a further education course and facing financial hardship may be eligible for Learner Support to pay for things like: accommodation and travel, course materials and equipment and childcare. Further information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/learner-support>.

On apprenticeships, we are continuing to support employers and training providers in dealing with, and responding to, the impacts of COVID-19. While we do not yet know the full impact of COVID-19, our priority is ensuring that apprentices and employers can continue to access high quality training, both now and in the future. We continue to support traineeships and have introduced flexibilities to enable providers to continue to deliver them where possible, given that traineeships will play an important part in supporting young people back into learning and work.

In early June this year, we launched a £7 million Alternative Provision Transition Fund to enable Alternative Provision schools to support all their Year 11 pupils to transition successfully into post-16 settings this summer, and avoid becoming NEET.

### **Egypt: Foreign Relations**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when the Prime Minister last spoke to the current President of Egypt; and what discussions they have had about military tensions with Libya and the reported remarks made by President al-Sisi on 22 June to the Egyptian military

that it should be ready to carry out missions in Libya. [HL6232]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are in regular contact with Egypt on the need for all sides in Libya to engage in the UN led political process. The Foreign Secretary raised this with his Egyptian counterpart, most recently on 8 June. Since President Sisi's announcement, we have spoken to senior Egyptian officials to reiterate the need for a political solution and that any intervention would exacerbate the conflict.

We remain deeply concerned by the situation in Libya and the risks to wider regional stability. The UK is actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. We continue to call on all Libyan parties, and their external backers, to de-escalate, commit to a lasting ceasefire and return to UN-led political talks. We welcome the recent resumption by the Government of National Accord and the Libyan National Army of talks on the framework for a ceasefire. It is essential that both sides engage constructively with this process.

### **Film: Internet**

*Asked by Lord Farmer*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether there is a requirement for the same protections that exist for content in cinemas and on DVDs to be present for online content; and whether they are working with the film industry to seek the voluntary adoption of British Board of Film Classification age ratings for online content. [HL6623]

**Baroness Barran:** The Government is committed to making the UK the safest place in the world to be online. While adoption of the British Board of Film Classification's best practice age ratings by online platforms is currently voluntary, we welcome Netflix's commitment to work towards complete coverage and support the BBFC's drive to encourage other Video On Demand platforms to follow suit. By doing so, this will provide consumers with well recognised age ratings and consumer advice.

### **Florence Nightingale Museum: Coronavirus**

*Asked by Lord Crisp*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to 2020 being designated the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, what support they intend to make available to support the Florence Nightingale Museum to mitigate lost income during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6215]

**Baroness Barran:** Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis officials and ministers have been in even more regular contact to understand the impact of the pandemic and the measures the Government has taken to fight it. And to understand what support museums and heritage organisations need and how best to get it to them.

The Government has also announced unprecedented support for business and workers, to protect them against the current economic emergency. Officials have been in regular contact with the Florence Nightingale Museum and are pleased that it has been able to benefit from measures such as the Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme.

We recognise the importance of the Florence Nightingale Museum and were pleased to collaborate with them to support their wonderful proposal to project a message of thanks to NHS and care staff onto the walls of the Houses of Parliament, to mark the bicentenary of Nightingale's birth on 12th May and International Nurses' Day. Furthermore, the Florence Nightingale Museum Trust was awarded £50,000 through the Heritage Emergency Fund so that they can continue their important work.

### Football: Ethnic Groups

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with (1) the Premier League, (2) the English Football League, and (3) the Professional Footballers' Association, about BAME coaching representation. [HL6386]

**Baroness Barran:** The Minister for Sport, Tourism and Heritage has frequent discussions with football authorities covering a range of issues, including BAME representation in the sport.

The government welcomes steps being taken by the Premier League, English Football League and Professional Footballers' Association to improve BAME coaching representation, including the recent announcement of a new coach placement scheme aimed at increasing the number of BAME players moving into full-time coaching roles in the professional game.

### Hezbollah

*Asked by Lord Polak*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of Hezbollah's involvement in (1) charitable, and (2) criminal networks, in the UK. [HL6248]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** We do not comment on intelligence matters.

### High Rise Flats: Insulation

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 29 June (HL6045), whether residents in buildings that have failed cladding tests in relation to aluminium composite material cladding are notified of that failure. [HL6293]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** Building safety is the responsibility of the building owner. Where a building is found to have unsafe ACM cladding, the building owner should inform all leaseholders and residents of this. Building owners should also inform leaseholders and residents of the nature of the remedial works they intend to carry out, and provide regular updates on progress.

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures are in place to protect those residents in buildings with unsafe aluminium composite material cladding; and how such residents are notified of those measures. [HL6294]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Government has worked closely with local authorities and Fire and Rescue Services to ensure that interim safety measures, where needed, are in place in all buildings until the cladding is replaced. The Responsible Person for the building, who may be building owner or managing agent, should inform residents of these measures.

Working with the Home Office, the Local Government Association and the National Fire Chiefs Council, government has established a Protection Board to provide greater assurance to central government of Fire and Rescue Service protection activity. This work included ensuring that the interim measures in place in ACM-clad high-rise residential buildings are well-maintained and providing assurance that fire safety risks are being managed effectively.

*Asked by Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 29 June (HL6045), when the corporate entities that have indicated that they are taking on the responsibility for the remediation of unsafe aluminium composite material cladding but where at least one of their buildings does not yet have a plan in place, named in the list published in February, will be held to account for the lack of remediation. [HL6295]

**Lord Greenhalgh:** The Department has been clear that some buildings are being remediated too slowly. To maintain the pace of remediation the department publishes the names of corporate entities which do not yet have a plan to remediate dangerous ACM.

We have written to the relevant local authorities, making sure they are aware of insufficient progress. The Joint Inspection Team, a team set up and funded by Government and hosted by the Local Government Association, is providing support to local authorities to take enforcement action under the Housing Act 2004. Action is currently being taken by a local authority for one of these buildings, and enforcement action has previously been taken by a Fire and Rescue Service for another of the buildings.

## Immigrants: Detainees

Asked by *Baroness Lister of Burtersett*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 17 June (HL5219), whether they will now answer the question put, namely, how many people have been transferred from (1) a prison to an immigration removal centre or (2) one immigration removal centre to another, since 23 March. [HL6636]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government published statistics relating to COVID-19 and the immigration system

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/statistics-relating-to-covid-19-and-the-immigration-system-may-2020> on gov.uk on 28 May and the latest Immigration Statistics publication includes the numbers of individuals detained under immigration powers in prisons. Statistics on people in immigration detention during the second quarter of 2020 (April to June) will be published in August in the immigration statistics quarterly release.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020>

Management information indicates that in the period from 23 March to 8 July 2020, 710 people have entered the immigration estate from the HM Prison Estate. This number includes those placed in the immigration estate temporarily prior to voluntary removal. All entrants to the immigration estate are placed in reverse cohort units in line with Public Health England guidance and those with particular health vulnerabilities offered the opportunity to 'shield'.

During this period there have also been 228 moves between immigration removal centres, with most of these internal moves within the Heathrow centres (Harmondsworth and Colnbrook) and the Gatwick centres (Tinsley House & Brook House).

## Immigration: Roma

Asked by *Baroness Whitaker*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to mitigate the issues faced by Roma EU citizens resident in the UK, with settled status, who may have their applications for naturalisation refused because they did not have Comprehensive Sickness Insurance before settled status was granted throughout any period of self-sufficiency or as a student. [HL6271]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** It has always been a requirement for a person to have been in the UK lawfully during the residential qualifying period for naturalisation.

EEA Regulations set out the requirements which individuals need to follow if they wish to reside here lawfully before attaining permanent residence. For example, in the case of students or the self-sufficient – but not those who were working here – the possession of comprehensive sickness insurance has always been a

requirement under these regulations. Our customer guidance explains this position.

The British Nationality Act allows us to exercise discretion over this requirement in the special circumstances of a case. The nationality application form and guide encourage applicants to give us relevant information to help us do so, including for Roma EU citizens.

## Integrated Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy Review

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to restart the work of the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy. [HL6379]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government paused its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in April due to the pressing need to focus on COVID-19. We formally recommenced the Review on 24 June, building on the work done since the Review was originally launched in February.

Asked by *Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many months the consultation process for the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy will last. [HL6537]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Government paused its Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in April due to the pressing need to focus on COVID-19. We have formally recommenced the Review, building on the work done since February. We will engage with Parliament, the Devolved Administrations, external experts and wider stakeholders with an interest in our nation's security and prosperity. This includes our allies and partners, building on our ongoing dialogue on COVID-19 response and recovery. The Integrated Review will remain closely aligned with the Spending Review, to ensure that departments are equipped with the resources they need to enact the review's conclusions. An announcement on the Spending Review will be made in due course.

## Iran: Nuclear Power

Asked by *The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the International Atomic Energy Agency's announcement on 19 June that for the first time Iran is not cooperating with its inspectors at two nuclear sites, what new political initiatives they are undertaking within the E3 to ensure that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action does not collapse. [HL6233]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** On 25 June, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s Board of Governors adopted a resolution tabled by the E3 in response to Iran's denial of IAEA access to two sites, and

its failure to engage in substantive discussions with the IAEA on questions relating to possible undeclared material and activities. In denying access, Iran is not adhering to its legally binding safeguards obligations and the IAEA cannot verify the completeness and correctness of Iran's nuclear accountancy. The resolution reinforced the mandate of the IAEA Director General to continue his investigation, and sent a clear message to Iran that it should cooperate fully with the IAEA.

The Foreign Secretary made clear in his E3 statement on 19 June that we remain committed to ensuring that Iran never develops a nuclear weapon. Iran's reductions in nuclear compliance raise serious proliferation concerns, which is why the UK, with France and Germany, triggered the JCPoA's Dispute Resolution Mechanism (DRM) on 14 January 2020. We are clear that we want to use the DRM to resolve these concerns, and bring Iran back into full compliance with the JCPoA. The UK continues to work closely with all JCPoA parties, including Iran, to find a diplomatic way forward.

### **Iraq: Minority Groups**

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assistance they are providing to religious and ethnic minorities in northern Iraq (1) to allow them to return to their homes in Nineveh province, and (2) to prevent any resurgence of ISIS in northern Iraq. [HL6236]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We remain committed to supporting displaced Iraqis, including religious and ethnic minorities, to return to their homes, such as in Nineveh province. UK humanitarian and stabilisation assistance, totalling £382 million since 2014, has contributed to helping more than 4 million to return to their homes. Our support includes £28 million to the UNDP Funding Facility for Stabilisation (FFS), which has completed over 490 projects in the Ninewa plains helping to restore vital infrastructure and basic services. We also remain committed to supporting Iraq to prevent Daesh resurgence, as the Foreign Secretary reaffirmed to new Iraqi Foreign Minister Fouad Hussein on 25 June. As part of our leading role in the Global Coalition against Daesh, UK forces have trained over 110,000 members of the Iraqi Security Forces and 21,000 Kurdish Peshmerga.

### **Islamic State: Unmanned Air Vehicles**

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many drone strikes British Armed Forces carried out against ISIL in June. [HL6393]

**Baroness Goldie:** In June Zero (0) Weapon Release Events were recorded from Remotely Piloted Air Systems against Daesh targets. The Ministry of Defence regularly releases statistics on UK air activity under Op SHADER on the gov.uk website.

### **Israel: Palestinians**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure that Palestinians are protected in the West Bank (1) now, and (2) in the future. [HL6268]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are committed to the objective of an independent, sovereign and prosperous Palestinian state, living side by side with a safe and secure Israel. That is why we put such emphasis on strengthening Palestinian institutions and fostering sustainable economic growth. Economic progress can never be a substitute for a political settlement, but it is vital in the interim that Palestinians see tangible improvements in their daily lives. We consistently call for an immediate end to all actions that undermine the viability of the two-state solution and are encouraging both sides to maintain calm and avoid taking actions which make peace more difficult to achieve. In terms of our programmes, we fund a number of projects that support Palestinians communities in the West Bank, from the effects of settlement expansion in particular. Our legal aid programme also supports Bedouin communities and Palestinians facing demolition or home eviction in both Area C and East Jerusalem.

### **Israeli Settlements**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to protect Palestinian-owned land near Bethlehem from any encroachment by the expansion of Efrat. [HL6265]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Our position on settlements is clear: they are illegal under international law and damaging to renewed efforts to launch peace negotiations. We urge Israel to halt settlement expansion immediately.

### **Jerusalem: Planning**

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, to protect people living in East Jerusalem from being discriminated against by planning laws. [HL6267]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We recognise that Palestinians face severe difficulty in securing building permissions for homes and infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Area C. We continue to urge the Government of Israel to develop improved mechanisms for zoning, planning and permitting in Area C for the benefit of the Palestinian population, including by facilitating local Palestinian participation in such processes.

## Leisure: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Pendry*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they will reconsider when leisure centres are able to re-open; and what additional funding they will provide to leisure centres to ensure that they remain financially viable and able to retain staff while they are prevented from opening. [HL6317]

**Baroness Barran:** Sports and physical activity facilities play a crucial role in supporting adults and children to be active. As announced on 9 July, from 11 July, outdoor swimming pools will be able to open and from 25 July indoor gyms, leisure centres (including sports halls) and swimming pools in England should be able to reopen. These facilities will be able to offer on-site services to customers, provided they are COVID-secure and follow Government guidance.

The updated guidance can be found at the [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) website and includes advice for providers of pool, gym and leisure facilities on cleaning, social distancing, and protection for staff to help venues get back up and running safely.

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 operation of the scheme.

## Loans: Lebanon

*Asked by Lord Polak*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they have taken to ensure that the IMF's support for Lebanon (1) is subject to strict oversight and monitoring, and (2) has mechanisms in place to ensure it is not misspent. [HL6247]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** IMF programmes in general are subject to strict policies of oversight and monitoring, underpinned by well-established mechanisms.

Under its Articles of Agreement, the IMF must establish adequate safeguards for the use of its resources. IMF lending requires safeguards covering key areas of governance and control to help mitigate the risks of misuse of Fund resources and misreporting of data. These safeguards may include limits on how much can be borrowed, conditions on the loans, measures to deal with misreporting or arrears, and safeguard assessments of central banks.

The UK uses its seat at the IMF's Board to help shape these policies and ensure that they are applied across all the IMF's lending arrangements.

## Metropolitan Police: Complaints

*Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they plan to take following the complaint filed against the Metropolitan Police for its "aggressive and unnecessary actions" against an unresisting black father and his 13 year old son who were threatened with tasers when they were wrongfully suspected of being involved in a stabbing on 4 June. [HL6263]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The police are required to handle complaints in accordance with the law. The duties of the police in handling specific allegations, and the role of the Independent Office for Police Conduct, are set out in legislation. It would not be appropriate for the Government to comment on individual cases.

In February 2020, the government implemented comprehensive reforms to the police complaints and discipline systems, to streamline processes and ensure greater transparency and independence in the way complaints are handled.

## Military Aircraft

*Asked by Baroness Garden of Frogal*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what consideration, if any, was given to (1) replacing, or (2) refurbishing, the Vigilant airframes; and if any such consideration was given, why were both options rejected. [HL6463]

**Baroness Goldie:** Officials have now developed a number of options to be considered. The full financial and legal implications of these options are being explored so that the Defence Secretary can decide how to proceed. Work on this is continuing at pace both in the Ministry of Defence and across Government.

## Ministry of Defence: Racial Discrimination

*Asked by Lord Touhig*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how much compensation has been paid out as a result of claims to the employment tribunal for racial discrimination and harassment brought by serving and former service personnel against the Ministry of Defence in (1) 2010, (2) 2011, (3) 2012, (4) 2013, (5) 2014, and (6) 2015. [HL6425]

**Baroness Goldie:** Details of compensation paid (by year) as a result of employment tribunals brought against the Ministry of Defence for racial discrimination by serving and former Service personnel is provided below.

<i>Year Claim Brought</i>	<i>Amount Paid £</i>
2010	21,000
2011	16,500
2012	0
2013	0
2014	142,000
2015	0
Total	179,500

### Mobile Broadband

*Asked by Viscount Waverley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the case for withdrawing support for 5G telecoms networks in favour of further research into 6G technology. [HL6593]

**Baroness Barran:** 6G mobile technology is in the early research phase. The Government's focus is on the UK becoming a world leader in 5G mobile technology, and for the majority of the UK population to have access to a 5G signal by 2027. To support this ambition, the Government is investing £200 million in a 5G Testbeds and Trials programme. The Mobile Network Operators are similarly focussed on rolling out commercial 5G coverage across the UK and, as a result, it is currently available in over 80 UK towns and cities.

### Museums and Galleries: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Crisp*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they have made, or intend to make, available to small museums which have had to close during the COVID-19 pandemic and are unable to cover their non-staffing and other costs. [HL6214]

**Baroness Barran:** Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis officials and ministers have been in even more regular contact to understand the impact of the pandemic and the measures the Government has taken to fight it. And to understand what support museums and heritage organisations need and how best to get it to them.

In response to this information, DCMS arms' length bodies have created sector specific support. The National Lottery Heritage Fund launched the £50 million Heritage Emergency Fund, and Historic England launched a £2 million Emergency Fund. This emergency short-term funding will help address pressures over the next 3-6 months for those organisations most in immediate need.

It is also worth noting that a fund has been set up for certain small businesses with ongoing fixed property-related costs, previously outside the scope of the business grant funds scheme, including small charity properties.

The Government continues to monitor the impact of these and other measures.

### Myanmar: Peace Negotiations

*Asked by The Marquess of Lothian*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, together with international partners, to support the resumption of negotiations under the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Myanmar. [HL6235]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) remains an important mechanism to prevent conflict across the country that disproportionately affects civilian communities. It is vital that all parties engage in good faith. The UK provides support to Myanmar's Peace Process through the multi-donor Joint Peace Fund. This fund provides support to mechanisms established within both the NCA and bilateral ceasefire agreements, as well as providing specific technical support to conflict management mechanisms and negotiation groups involved in the process ahead of formal dialogues. Through the fund we can provide the direct support needed for coordination and the development of common positions in order to enable negotiations.

We welcome the announcement of the intention to hold a Union Peace Conference this summer. However, we are concerned that the formal process is not inclusive of all groups so will have a limited impact on conflict in large parts of Myanmar. We acknowledge the Government's recent attempts to resume talks with non-signatories digitally. Outside of the NCA, the Tatmadaw's recent unilateral ceasefire was welcome but excluded large parts of the country.

### Offenders: Pakistan

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Baroness Williams of Trafford on 24 June (HL5064), what assessment they have made of whether Abdul Aziz, Adil Khan, and Qari Abdul Rauf have connections in (1) the Home Office, or (2) UK Visas and Immigration, which have had an impact on their deportation. [HL6245]

*Asked by Lord Pearson of Rannoch*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what progress they have made towards the deportation of (1) Adil Khan, (2) Qari Abdul Rauf, and (3) Abdul Aziz. [HL6246]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** I refer the noble Lord to my answer of 24 June 2020 which can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2020-06-02/HL5062/>.

## Pakistan: Religious Freedom

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the statement by the Speaker of Pakistan's Punjab Assembly that the construction of a new Hindu temple in Islamabad should be forbidden; what representations they intend to make to the government of Pakistan about (1) the obligations under Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and (2) the freedom of religion or belief. [[HL6427](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We are concerned by any comments which suggest that there should be restrictions on Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). We are in contact with Hindu community groups in Pakistan, and are monitoring the situation closely. We engage at a senior level with the Pakistani Government on our concerns about FoRB and the mistreatment of religious and ethnic groups. Our High Commission in Islamabad frequently engages with the Hindu community to understand their needs. I raised our concerns about FoRB and the protection of minority religious communities with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister, Dr Shireen Mazari, on 5 June. The UK High Commissioner to Pakistan raised our concerns about FoRB with Pakistan's Human Rights Minister on 8 June. We will continue to urge the Government of Pakistan at senior levels to guarantee the fundamental rights of its citizens, regardless of their belief, in accordance with international standards.

## Palestinians: Recognition of States

Asked by *Lord Judd*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what arrangements they have made to recognise the state of Palestine. [[HL6312](#)]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK will recognise a Palestinian state at a time when it best serves the objective of peace. Bilateral recognition in itself cannot end the occupation. Without a negotiated settlement the occupation and the problems that come with it will continue.

## Ports: Northern Ireland

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government (1) what progress has been made in the construction of the inspection facilities at the ports of (a) Warrenpoint, (b) Belfast, and (c) Larne, as part of the post-Brexit custom checks allied to the New Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and (2) who will pay for the (a) construction, and (b) operation of those facilities. [[HL6253](#)]

**Lord Gardiner of Kimble:** Applications were submitted to the European Commission at the end of June for sanitary and phytosanitary inspection facilities at the ports of Belfast, Warrenpoint, Larne and Foyle. These

applications were submitted to ensure we meet our agreements under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

DAERA and Defra will continue to work together to develop plans for the construction of these facilities. The facilities will be operated by DAERA in conjunction with local authorities, the Food Standards Agency and the port operators. The Government has agreed in principle to fund the construction costs for these facilities. This funding is limited to costs associated with reaching the required level of compliance to implement the UK's obligations in relation to the Protocol.

## Protest: Bristol

Asked by *Lord Lexden*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many people have been (1) interviewed, and (2) charged, in connection with the removal of the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol on 7 June; and what estimate they have made, if any, of the cost to Avon and Somerset Police of policing the Black Lives Matter protest on that day. [[HL6227](#)]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The investigation into this crime is an operational matter for Avon and Somerset Police, and these questions are better directed at them.

## Richmond Desmond

Asked by *Lord Strasburger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many times the Prime Minister has met Richard Desmond in the last 12 months; where each meeting took place; and what was discussed on each such occasion. [[HL6259](#)]

Asked by *Lord Strasburger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the Prime Minister and Richard Desmond have ever talked on the telephone or sent messages in any form to each other; and if so, what was the subject of those messages. [[HL6260](#)]

Asked by *Lord Strasburger*

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether any aide of the Prime Minister has communicated with Richard Desmond or his staff; if so, when; and what was the subject of those communications. [[HL6261](#)]

**Lord True:** Details of Ministerial meetings with external organisations are published on [GOV.UK](#).

Mr Desmond attended an official business reception in Downing Street in September 2019 alongside a wide range of business representatives.

Otherwise, such requested information would not be centrally collated or held. Notwithstanding, as has been previously noted in Parliament, neither the Prime Minister nor No 10 Downing Street has had any contact with Mr Desmond or his representatives in relation to the Westferry planning application or appeal.

## Riot Control Weapons

Asked by *Lord Alton of Liverpool*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the report by Amnesty International Tear Gas: an investigation, published in June, which details examples of tear gas misuse in 22 countries including the territory of Hong Kong; what assessment they have made of the effects of tear gas (1) when fired directly at people in large volumes, (2) in response to peaceful protests, and (3) in confined spaces; what steps can be taken if UN Guidelines on its use are ignored; and what plans they have to press for more effective regulation of the design, trade and use of tear gas. [HL5744]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** Whilst the Department of Health Committee on Toxicity has approved the use of CS spray, actions taken by the police or security agencies during protest must be proportionate, necessary and in accordance with guidelines.

The Government takes strategic export control responsibilities seriously. We examine every strategic export application on a case-by-case basis against strict Criteria. We draw on a range of sources in making assessments, including NGOs and international organisations, our diplomatic posts, and reports from our overseas networks. Our export licensing system allows us to respond quickly to changing facts on the ground and we can take action when our assessment changes. The Department for International Trade would not issue a licence if to do so was inconsistent with the Consolidated Criteria. If it was being misused, the Foreign and Commonwealth office would advise them accordingly on export licence applications.

We continue to monitor developments closely, seeking further information where appropriate. As an example, on 25 June 2019, the then Foreign Secretary announced that we would not issue any further export licenses for crowd control equipment to Hong Kong until we are satisfied that concerns raised on human rights and fundamental freedoms have been thoroughly addressed. As we have said repeatedly, we believe the Hong Kong SAR Government should establish a robust and independent investigation into events.

## Schools: Coronavirus

Asked by *Lord Watson of Invergowrie*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many members of the COVID-19 Response School Stakeholder Advisory Group have been asked to sign personal confidentiality agreements by the Department for Education. [HL6185]

**Baroness Berridge:** Members of the COVID-19 Response School Stakeholder Advisory Group are not required to sign personal confidentiality agreements.

## Slavery: Prosecutions

Asked by *Lord Bourne of Aberystwyth*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to ensure the effective prosecution of those who commit crimes related to modern slavery. [HL6613]

**Baroness Williams of Trafford:** The Government is committed to tackling modern slavery and bringing perpetrators of these heinous crimes to justice.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 gives law enforcement the tools and powers to tackle modern slavery, including a maximum life sentences for perpetrators and enhanced protection for victims. There has been a significant increase in operational law enforcement activity to tackle modern slavery over the last few years. The number of live police operations has increased, from 188 in December 2016 to 1,640 in May 2020. We are also seeing an increase in the number of prosecutions brought and convictions secured. We continue to work closely with criminal justice partners to improve the effectiveness of modern slavery investigations to help increase the overall number of prosecutions.

The Home Office has provided a further £1.4 million this year to continue dedicated funding for the police to tackle modern slavery, under the new Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme. This funding will enable us to support the police to pursue and disrupt offenders and drive forward work to increase modern slavery prosecutions.

## Taxation

Asked by *Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government when they intend to make a statement about the future of (1) VAT rates, and (2) other fiscal measures in the UK [HL6252]

**Lord Agnew of Oulton:** On 8 July the Chancellor announced a Plan for Jobs to support the UK's economic recovery by supporting, protecting and creating jobs across all regions and nations of the UK. As part of this plan, and to support over 150,000 businesses and protect 2.4 million jobs following the lifting of the Covid-19 lockdown, the Government will temporarily apply a reduced rate of VAT (5%) to tourist attractions and goods and services supplied by the hospitality sector.

The "hospitality sector" includes accommodation such as hotels, and food eaten-in or hot food taken-out from restaurants, cafes and pubs.

The temporary reduced rate will apply for six months. It will come into effect on 15 July 2020 and end on 12 January 2021 and apply across the UK.

The VAT cut aims to support the hospitality and tourism sector across the UK to re-establish eating out in restaurants, and to help businesses recover from the economic impacts of Covid-19, supporting employment.

Businesses will have one week to prepare before the reduced rate comes into effect, with guidance published on 9 July 2020.

The Chancellor said on 8 July that he will set out a Budget in the Autumn. The exact timing of the next Budget will be a matter for the Chancellor to decide in due course.

### Television Licences: Older People

*Asked by Lord Hay of Ballyore*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with the BBC about free television licences for people aged over 75. [HL6470]

**Baroness Barran:** The government meets with the BBC on regular occasions to discuss a wide range of issues, including the over 75 concession. The Government has consistently made clear its disappointment with the BBC's decision to restrict the over 75 licence fee concession to only those in receipt of pension credit. We recognise the value of free TV licences for over-75s and believe they should be funded by the BBC.

The BBC remains responsible for the administration of the concession and it will be responsible for setting out what those affected will need to do. It must look urgently at how it can use its substantial licence fee income to support older people and deliver for UK audiences of all ages.

### Trade Agreements: China

*Asked by Lord Stevenson of Balmacara*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to reports of possible human rights, modern slavery, and security concerns relating to exports from China, what plans they have to establish a trade agreement with the government of China; what sectors any such agreement would cover; and what assessment they have made of whether any such agreement would meet the Government's environmental, food, and animal welfare standards. [HL6384]

**Lord Grimstone of Boscobel:** HM Government is clear that trade does not have to come at the expense of our values.

Our focus at the current time is negotiating Free Trade Agreements with the United States of America, Japan, Australia and New Zealand; alongside considering accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

We do not currently have plans to negotiate a free trade agreement with China.

China is – and remains – an important trading partner for the United Kingdom.

### Turkey: Human Rights

*Asked by Lord Hylton*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to discuss with the government of Turkey (1) the implications for prisoners awaiting trial of Articles 2 and 10 of the Turkish Constitution, and Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and (2) the release of Mr Deniz Yildirim. [HL6310]

**Baroness Sugg:** We regularly raise our human rights concerns with the Turkish authorities at the highest level, particularly around detentions, freedom of expression and association. Although we have not made specific representations on behalf of Mr Yildirim, we continue to urge the authorities to ensure that all detainees, (including former parliamentarians,) are treated in accordance with relevant international human rights standards, such as access to legal representation and medical care. We will continue to engage the Turkish Government on these important issues. We are clear in our expectation that Turkey, like all countries, should live up to its human rights obligations towards all its citizens.

### Veterans: Coronavirus

*Asked by Baroness Ritchie of Downpatrick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what support they are providing to veterans of the armed forces during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL6377]

**Lord True:** The Government continues to provide a full range of support services for veterans during the COVID-19 pandemic, with appropriate adjustments to those services to take into account the requirement for social distancing and to keep people safe.

This support has included NHS mental and physical health support, access to Veterans UK services including its welfare and transition services and a helpline telephone call back service and support for those veterans within the criminal justice system. In addition to this, the Government has continued to take further steps to support the Armed Forces community, including improved access to social housing and a £6m COVID-19 fund which has provided grants to 100 Service sector charities, including veterans' care and residential settings.

Government continues to work to ensure any new or changed support needs as a result of COVID-19 are identified and can be met. The Office for Veterans' Affairs has funded a new study with the King's Centre for Military Health Research, part of King's College London, exploring the impact of COVID-19 on veterans. This study will provide evidence about the impact of the pandemic on the veterans community and ensure any specific needs or impacts can be addressed.

## Wigan Athletic Football Club: Insolvency

*Asked by Lord Myners*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to investigate the English Football League's role in (1) approving the recent takeover of Wigan Athletic, and (2) the subsequent placement of that club into administration. [HL6500]

**Baroness Barran:** Football clubs are the heart of local communities, they have unique social value and many with a great history. It is vital they are protected.

The full details behind why Wigan Athletic has entered administration are still being established, and we will continue to engage with the English Football League (EFL) to fully understand the facts of the case. We welcome the announcement of the administrators that they will be exploring how the club ended up in this situation so soon after changing owners.

The Government has committed to a review of football governance, which will include consideration of the Owners' and Directors' Test.

## Wind Power: Cornwall

*Asked by Lord Berkeley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to engage with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership to ensure that the proposed floating offshore windfarms are built off the coast of Cornwall. [HL6201]

**Lord Callanan:** Floating offshore wind presents an exciting opportunity to support the UK's low carbon ambitions, whilst maintaining a leadership position in offshore innovation. The Department, alongside the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government are in regular contact with the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership, including in regard to their plans to transform the existing Wave Hub asset, off the coast of Cornwall, into a test site for floating offshore wind technologies.

The Government recently consulted on the forthcoming Contracts for Difference allocation round, due to open in 2021, and included questions on measures to support floating offshore wind. The Contracts for Difference approach could support the commercial build out of offshore zones in the Celtic Sea.

## Written Parliamentary Questions: Coronavirus

*Asked by Lord Scriven*

To ask the Leader of the House why the question for Topical Written Answer (1) HL3844, tabled on 5 May and due for answer on 13 May, and (2) HL4440, tabled on 13 May and due for answer on 20 May, have not been answered. [T] [HL6723]

**Baroness Evans of Bowes Park:** The Department of Health and Social Care has received unprecedented levels of written parliamentary questions this year, numbering over 6,000 of which 4,496 have been answered. The department has had to re-allocate staff to deal with this pandemic and are working extremely hard to manage the Covid-19 crisis and to provide updates, advice and guidance to parliament and the public. In addition, my office and I are in regular contact with the Department of Health and Social Care with regards to written questions.

## Yemen: Humanitarian Aid

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps the Foreign Secretary has taken to ensure full and unfettered humanitarian access to civilians in Yemen. [HL6221]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK has been at the forefront of international efforts to improve humanitarian access in Yemen. We call on all parties to immediately end restrictions on aid agencies and comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2451 by allowing safe, rapid, and unhindered access for the humanitarian response.

The Foreign Secretary raised this issue on 1 July in a joint article with the Foreign Ministers of Germany and Sweden, highlighting the need for obstacles to the delivery of aid to be removed.

We welcome recent steps taken by the Houthis to improve humanitarian access but are clear that more progress is needed or humanitarian organisations will be unable to continue delivering vital assistance.

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what urgent steps they intend to take with their international partners to try to avert the risk of catastrophic human suffering in Yemen. [HL6222]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** The UK is extremely concerned by the devastating humanitarian crisis in Yemen, which remains the largest in the world. This situation is now being compounded by the rapid spread of COVID-19, with UK-funded modelling estimating that Yemen has already had over 1 million infections.

In response, we are promptly disbursing funding from our new £160 million commitment for this financial year (2020/21), to help the UN tackle the spread of COVID-19 in Yemen and address the humanitarian crisis. We have already disbursed 32% of this funding and expect to have disbursed over 50% by the end of July.

We are encouraging other international donors to urgently provide funding to the UN humanitarian response, ahead of Yemen's expected COVID-19 peak in late July. We are also engaging with Yemeni authorities to encourage them to implement measures to suppress infection, allow access for international staff and COVID-19 supplies and protect the health system.

## Yemen: Military Intervention

*Asked by Baroness Helic*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the role of Iran in supplying missile technology and other weapons to the Houthi forces in Yemen. [HL6223]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** We have repeatedly set out concerns about Iranian destabilising behaviour in the region, including its political, financial and military support to the Houthis in Yemen. This support poses a real threat to regional stability and security, and we are committed to working with partners, including the UN, to address these concerns. The supply of weapons to the Houthis is prohibited under a number of UN Security Council Resolutions, including UNSCR 2216. Although the UN conventional arms embargo on Iran, under UNSCR 2231, is due to expire in October, UN sanctions targeting the supply of weapons to the Houthis will endure under other Resolutions. The EU arms embargo and UN ballistic missile restrictions on Iran will also

remain in place until 2023. The UK encourages all states to implement national export control best practice in support of these regimes.

## Zeid Qaysiyah

*Asked by Baroness Tonge*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the government of Israel about the death of Zeid Qaysiyah. [HL6264]

**Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon:** As we made clear at the UN Security Council remote meeting on the Middle East Peace Process on 20 May, we are deeply saddened to hear about the death of Zeid Qaysiyah after he was shot by Israeli forces. We have raised our concerns about the high numbers of Palestinians killed by the Israel Defense Forces with the Israeli authorities. In instances where there have been accusations of excessive use of force, we have advocated swift, transparent investigations and if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible be held to account.

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